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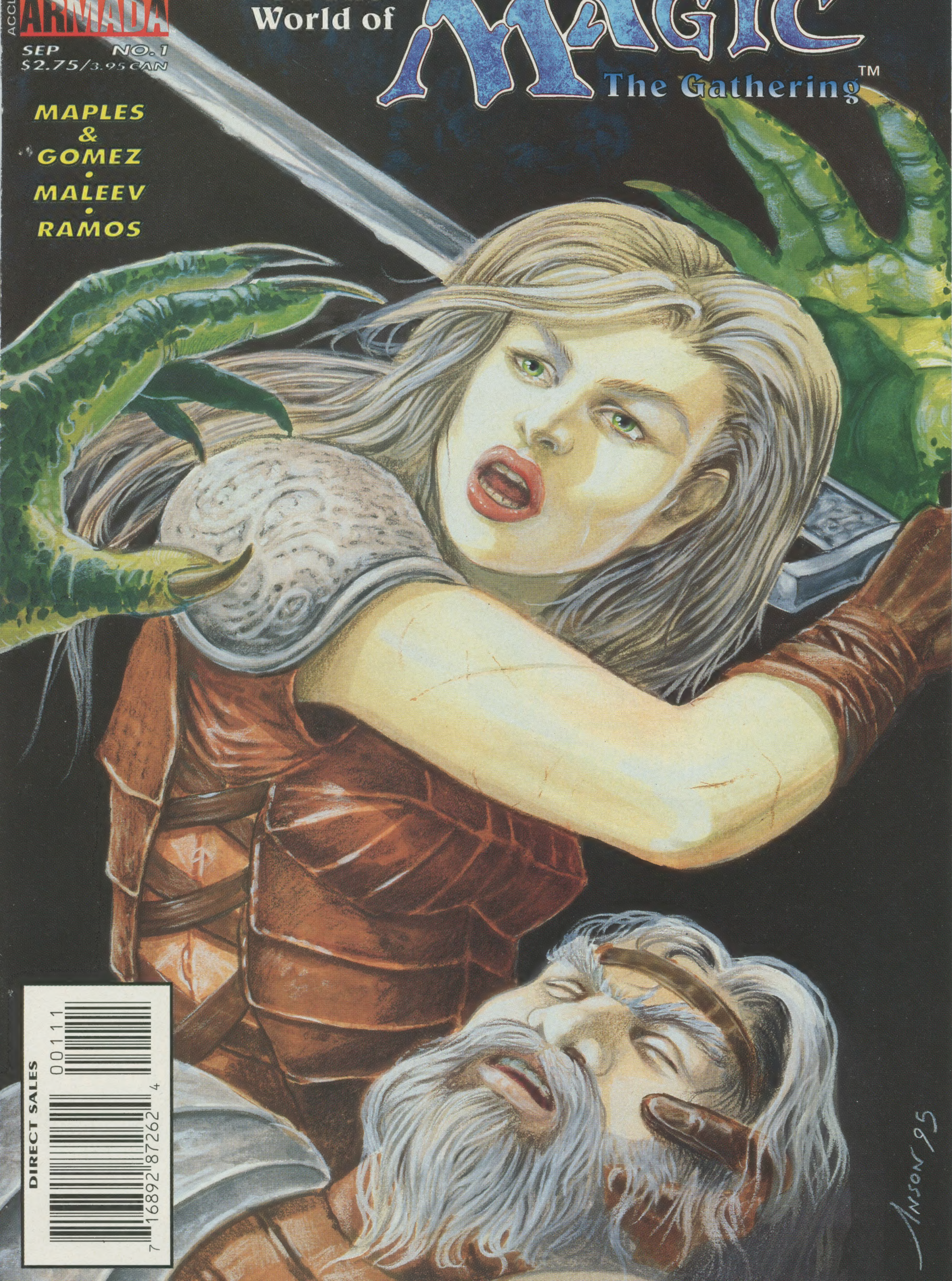

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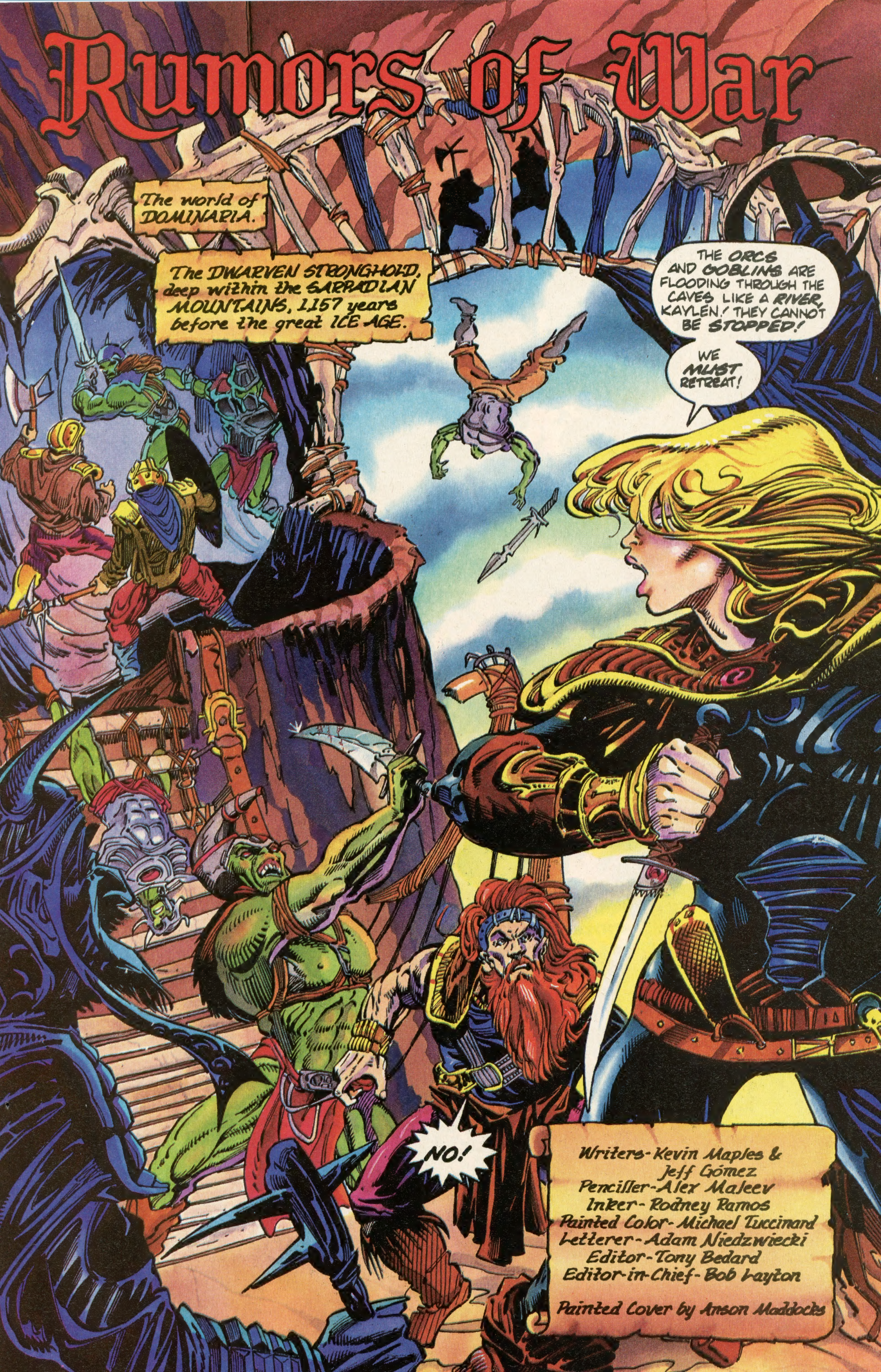
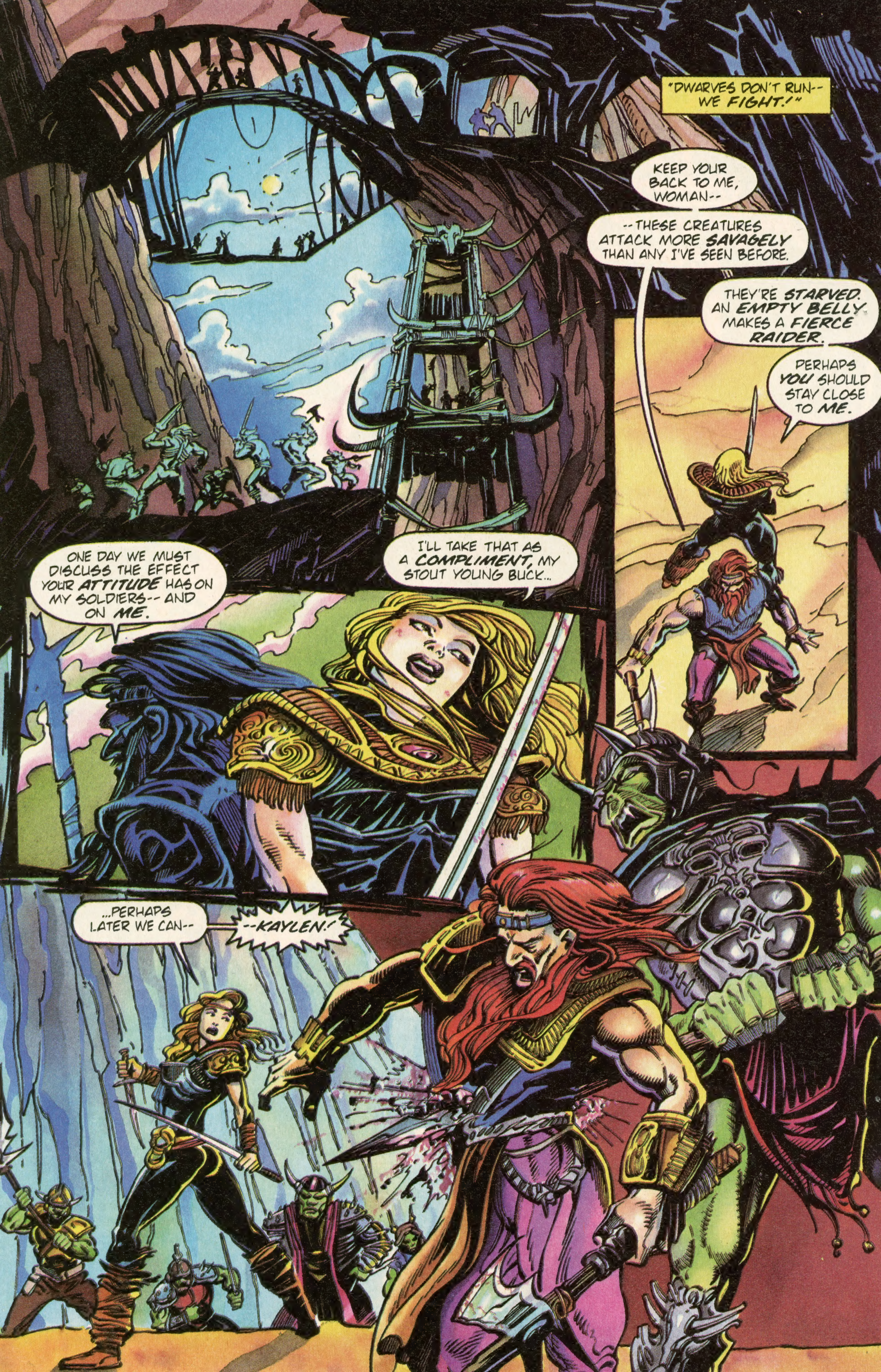
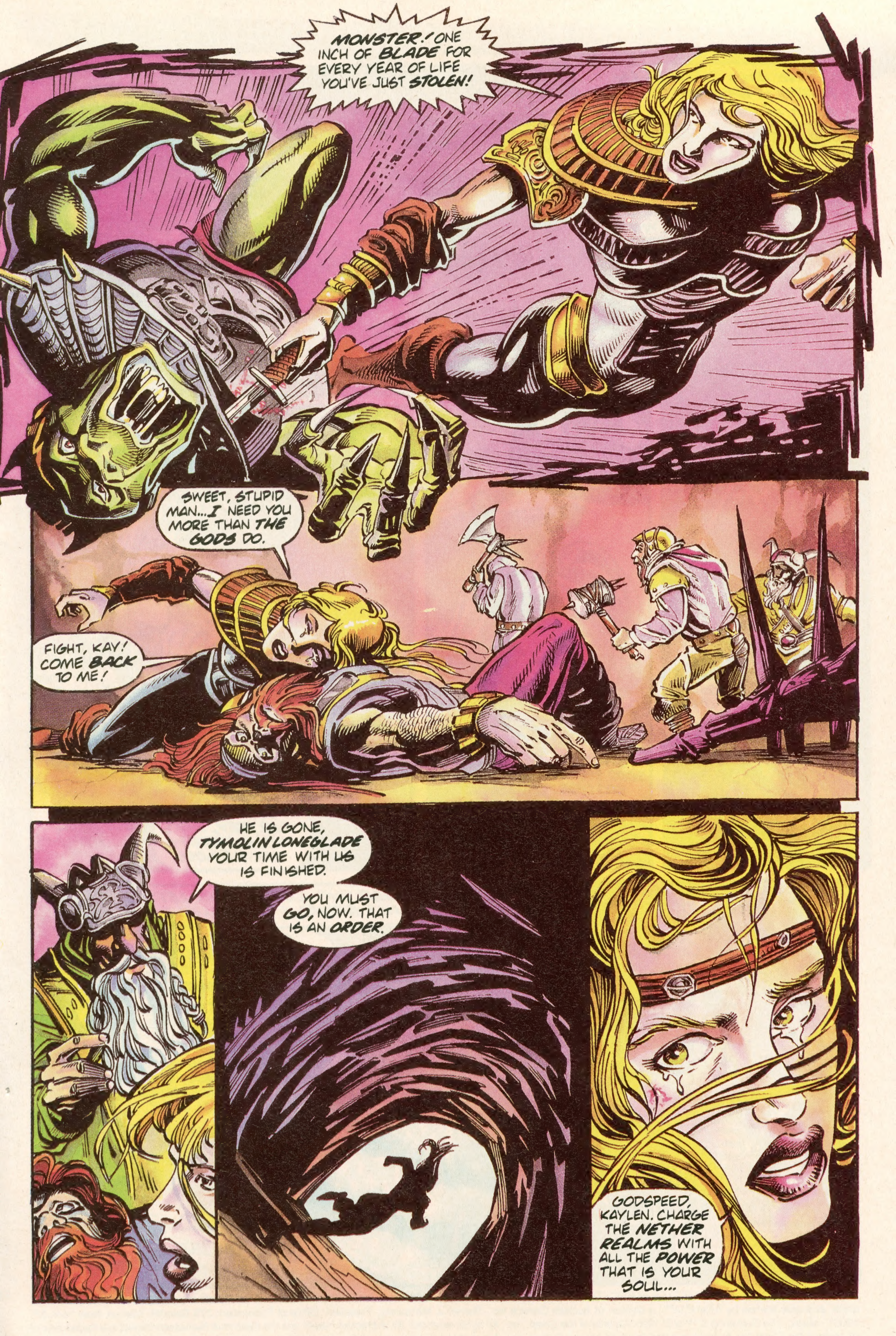
Rumors of War

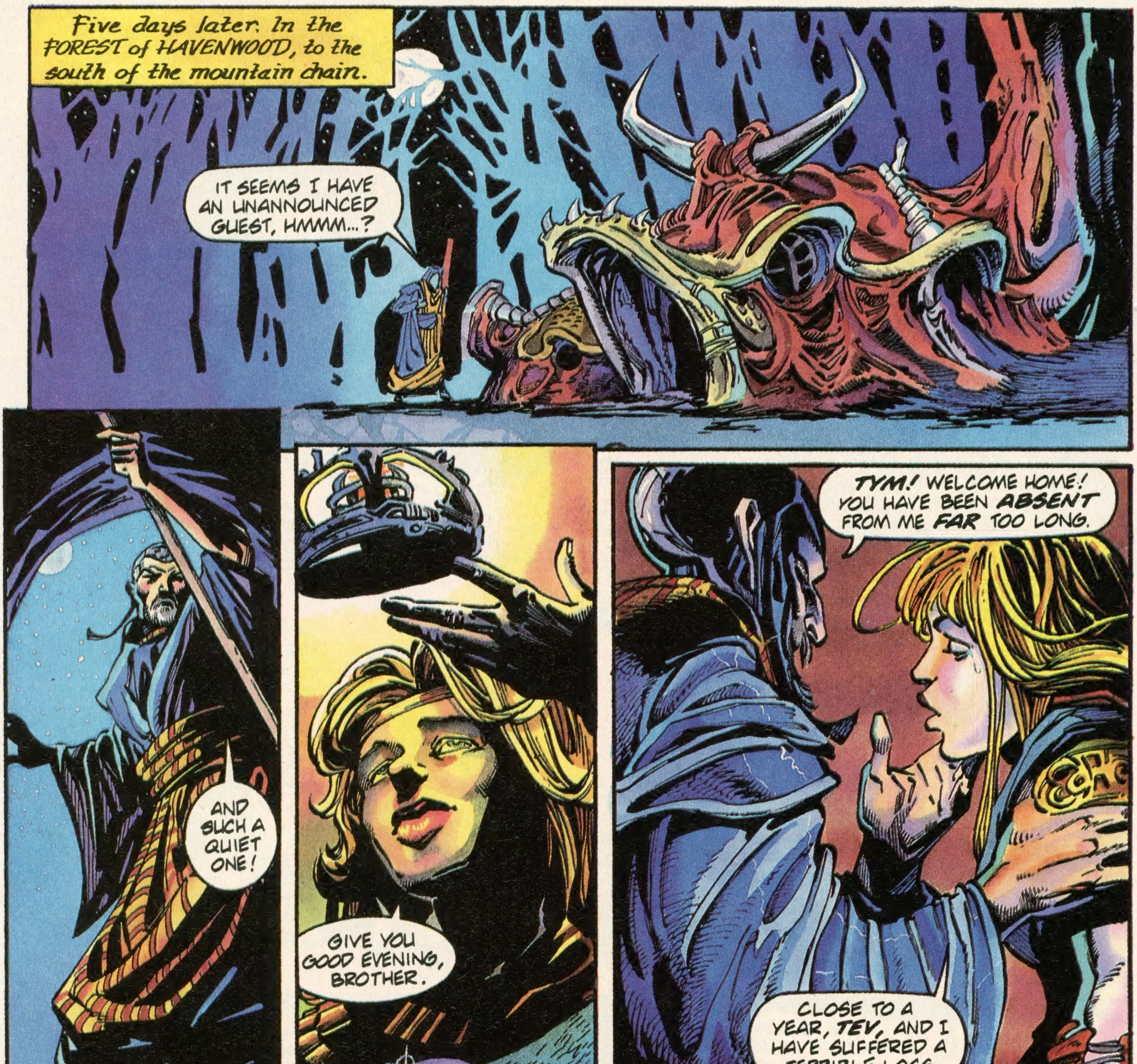

The world of DOMINARIA.
The DWARVEN STRONGHOLD, deep within the SARRADIAN MOUNTAINS, 1,157 years before the great ICE AGE.
THE ORCS AND GOBLINS ARE FLOODING THROUGH THE CAVES LIKE A RIVER, KAYLEN! THEY CANNOT BE STOPPED!
WE MUST RETREAT!
NO!

Writers-Kevin Maples &
Jeff Gómez
Penciller-Alex Maleev
Inker-Rodney Ramos
Painted Color-Michael Tuccinard
Letterer-Adam Niedzwiecki
Editor-Tony Bedard
Editor-in-Chief-Bob Layton

Painted Cover by Anson Maddocks


"DWARVES DON'T RUN-- WE FIGHT!"
KEEP YOUR BACK TO ME, WOMAN--
--THESE CREATURES ATTACK MORE SAVAGELY THAN ANY I'VE SEEN BEFORE.
THEY'RE STARVED. AN EMPTY BELLY MAKES A FIERCE RAIDER.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD STAY CLOSE TO ME.
ONE DAY WE MUST DISCUSS THE EFFECT YOUR ATTITUDE HAS ON MY SOLDIERS-- AND ON ME.
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT, MY STOUT YOUNG BUCK...
...PERHAPS LATER WE CAN--
--KAYLEN!


MONSTER! ONE INCH OF BLADE FOR EVERY YEAR OF LIFE YOU'VE JUST STOLEN!
SWEET, STUPID MAN... I NEED YOU MORE THAN THE GODS DO.
FIGHT, KAY! COME BACK TO ME!
HE IS GONE, TYMOLIN LONEGLADE YOUR TIME WITH US IS FINISHED.
YOU MUST GO, NOW. THAT IS AN ORDER.
GODSPEED, KAYLEN. CHARGE THE NETHER REALMS WITH ALL THE POWER THAT IS YOUR SOUL...


Five days later. In the FOREST of HAVENWOOD, to the south of the mountain chain.
IT SEEMS I HAVE AN UNANNOUNCED GUEST, HMMM...?
AND SUCH A QUIET ONE!
GIVE YOU GOOD EVENING, BROTHER.
TYM! WELCOME HOME! YOU HAVE BEEN ABSENT FROM ME FAR TOO LONG.
CLOSE TO A YEAR, TEV, AND I HAVE SUFFERED A TERRIBLE LOSS.
WOULD THAT YOU HAD NEVER LEFT. I CAN'T STAND IT THAT YOU ARE IN PAIN.
COME, LITTLE ONE-- SHARE YOUR SORROW WITH ME. I WILL LISTEN.
LET IT WAIT TILL MORNING. I HAVE TRAVELED WITHOUT SLEEP FOR SEVERAL DAYS, AND THE WEIGHT OF MY NEWS IS HEAVIER THAN MY STRENGTH CAN BEAR.
REST THEN, LITTLE SISTER.

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TOO BIG...
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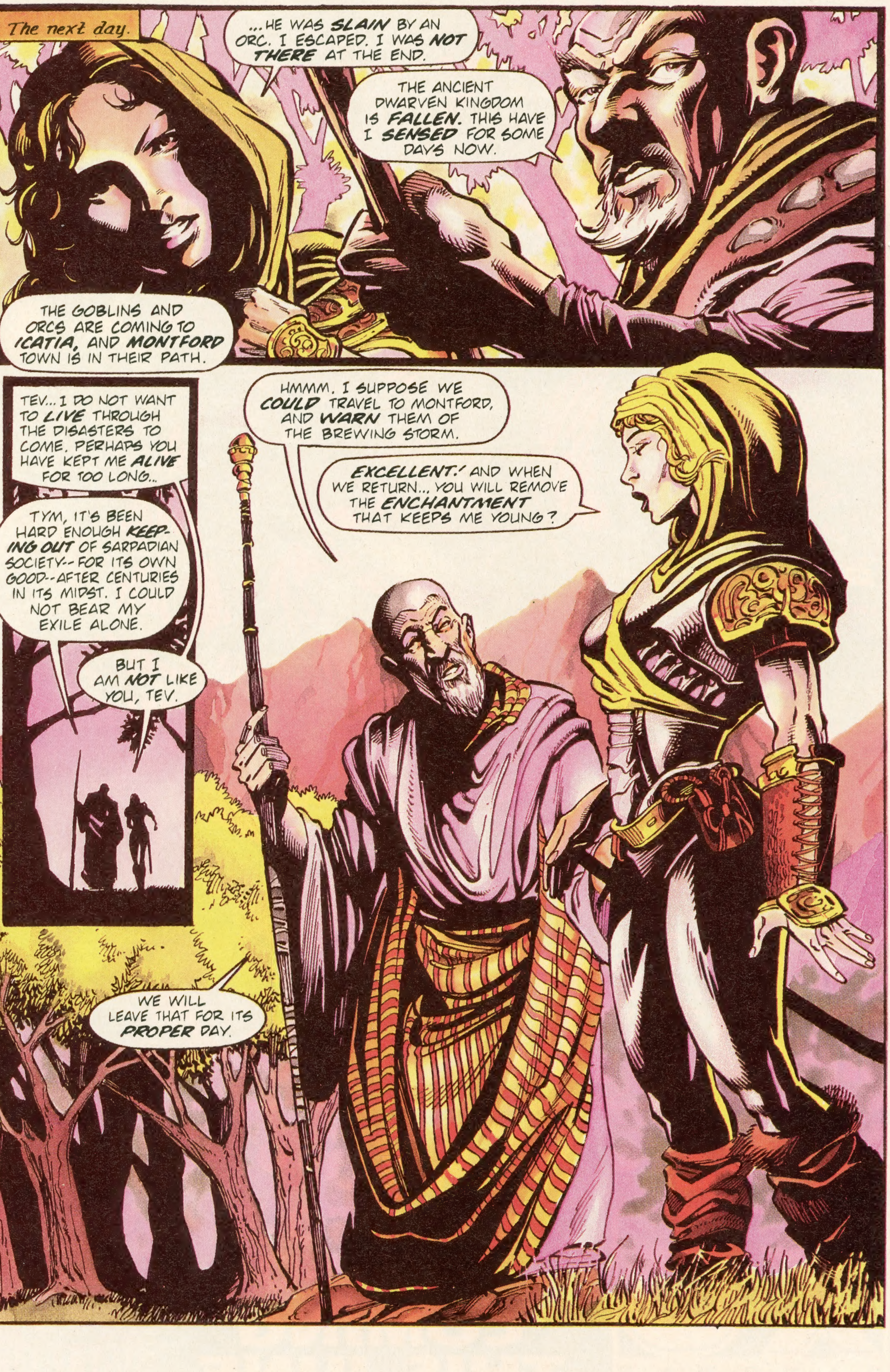
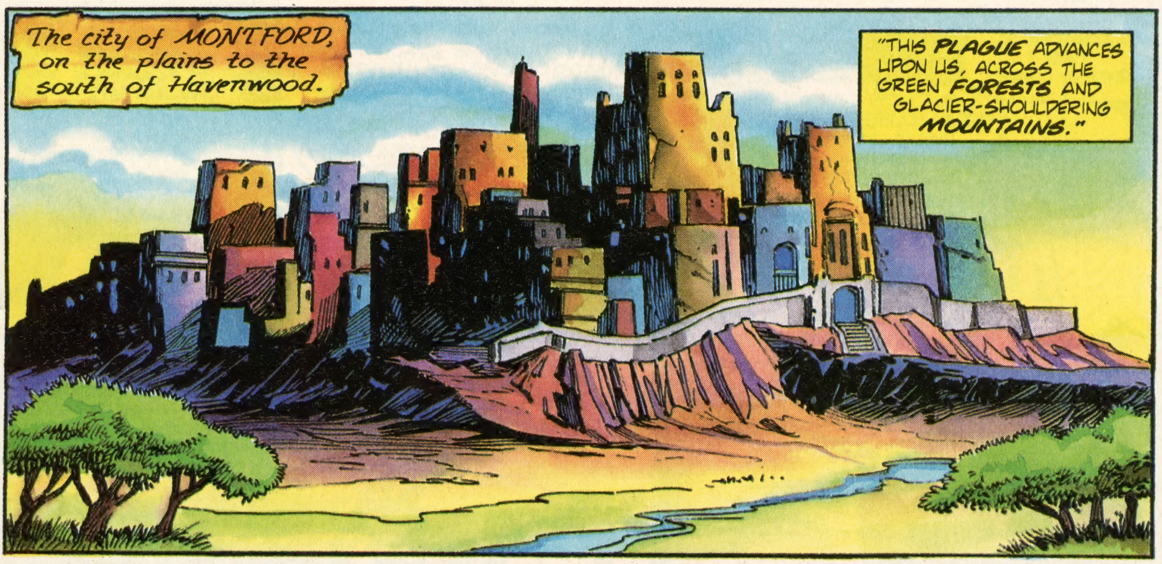
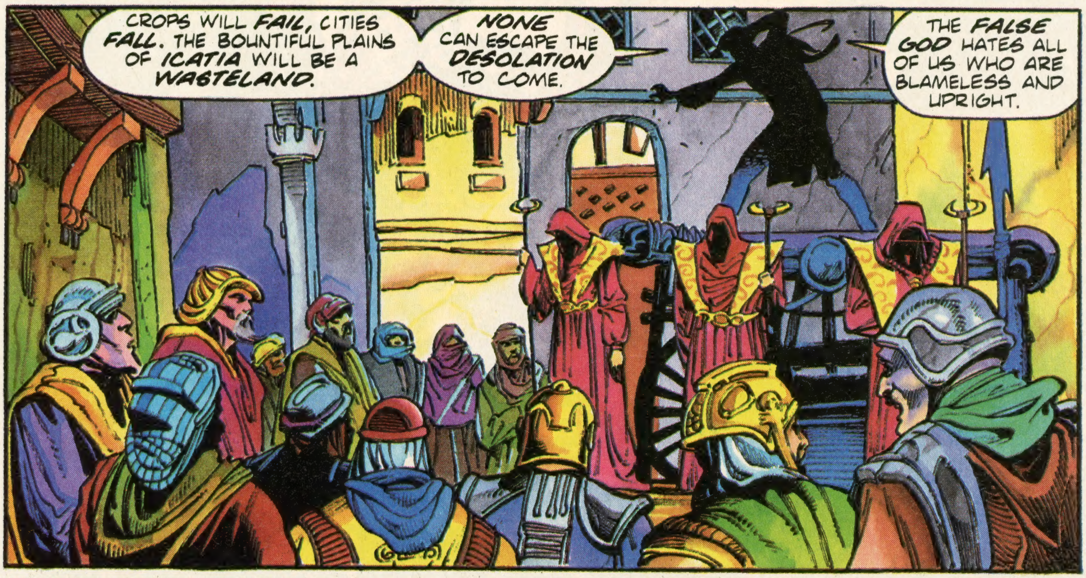
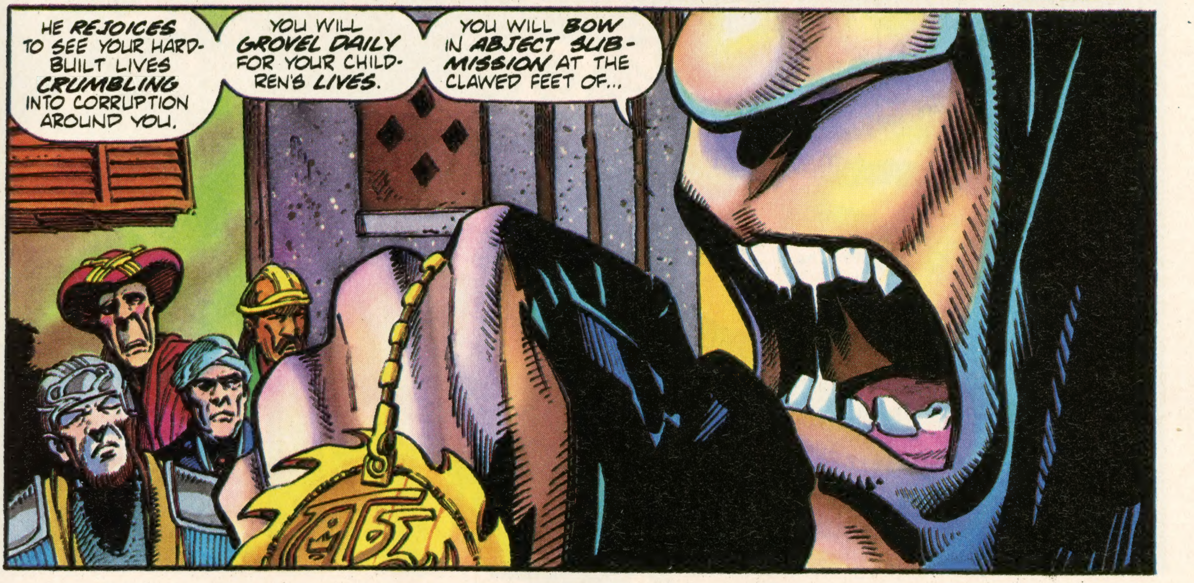
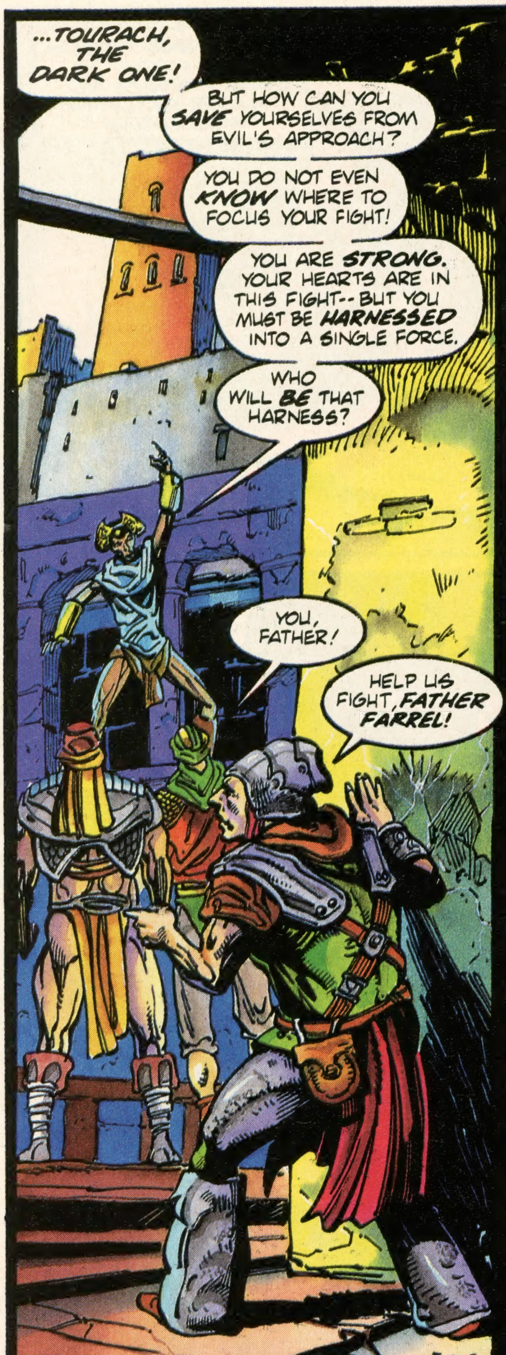
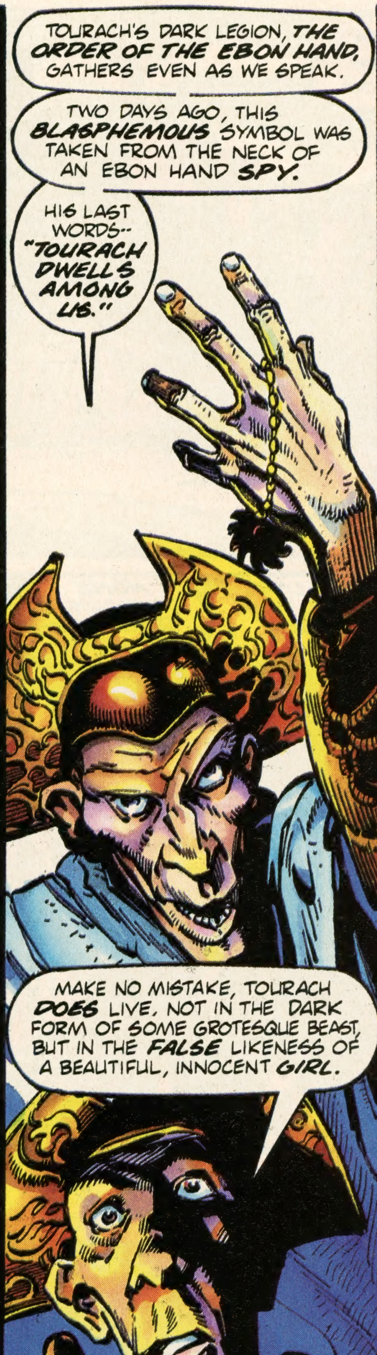

The next day.
...HE WAS **SLAIN** BY AN ORC. I ESCAPED. I WAS **NOT THERE** AT THE END.
THE ANCIENT DWARVEN KINGDOM IS **FALLEN.** THIS HAVE I **SENSED** FOR SOME DAYS NOW.
THE GOBLINS AND ORCS ARE COMING TO **ICATIA,** AND **MONTFORD** TOWN IS IN THEIR PATH.
HMMM. I SUPPOSE WE **COULD** TRAVEL TO MONTFORD, AND **WARN** THEM OF THE BREWING STORM.
EXCELLENT! AND WHEN WE RETURN... YOU WILL REMOVE THE **ENCHANTMENT** THAT KEEPS ME YOUNG?
TEV... I DO NOT WANT TO **LIVE** THROUGH THE DISASTERS TO COME. PERHAPS YOU HAVE KEPT ME **ALIVE** FOR TOO LONG...
TYM, IT'S BEEN HARD ENOUGH **KEEPING OUT** OF SARPADIAN SOCIETY-- FOR ITS OWN GOOD--AFTER CENTURIES IN ITS MIDST. I COULD NOT BEAR MY EXILE ALONE.
BUT I AM **NOT** LIKE YOU, TEV.
WE WILL LEAVE THAT FOR ITS **PROPER** DAY.

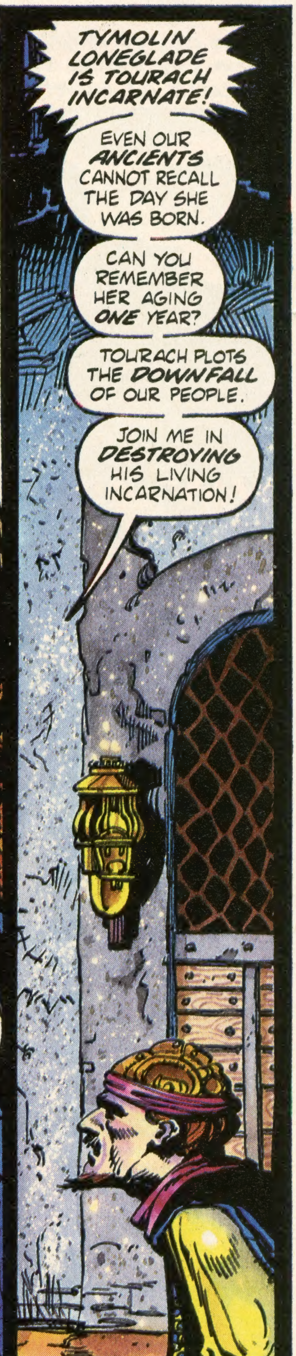

The city of MONTFORD, on the plains to the south of Havenwood.
"THIS PLAGUE ADVANCES UPON US, ACROSS THE GREEN FORESTS AND GLACIER-SHOULDERING MOUNTAINS."

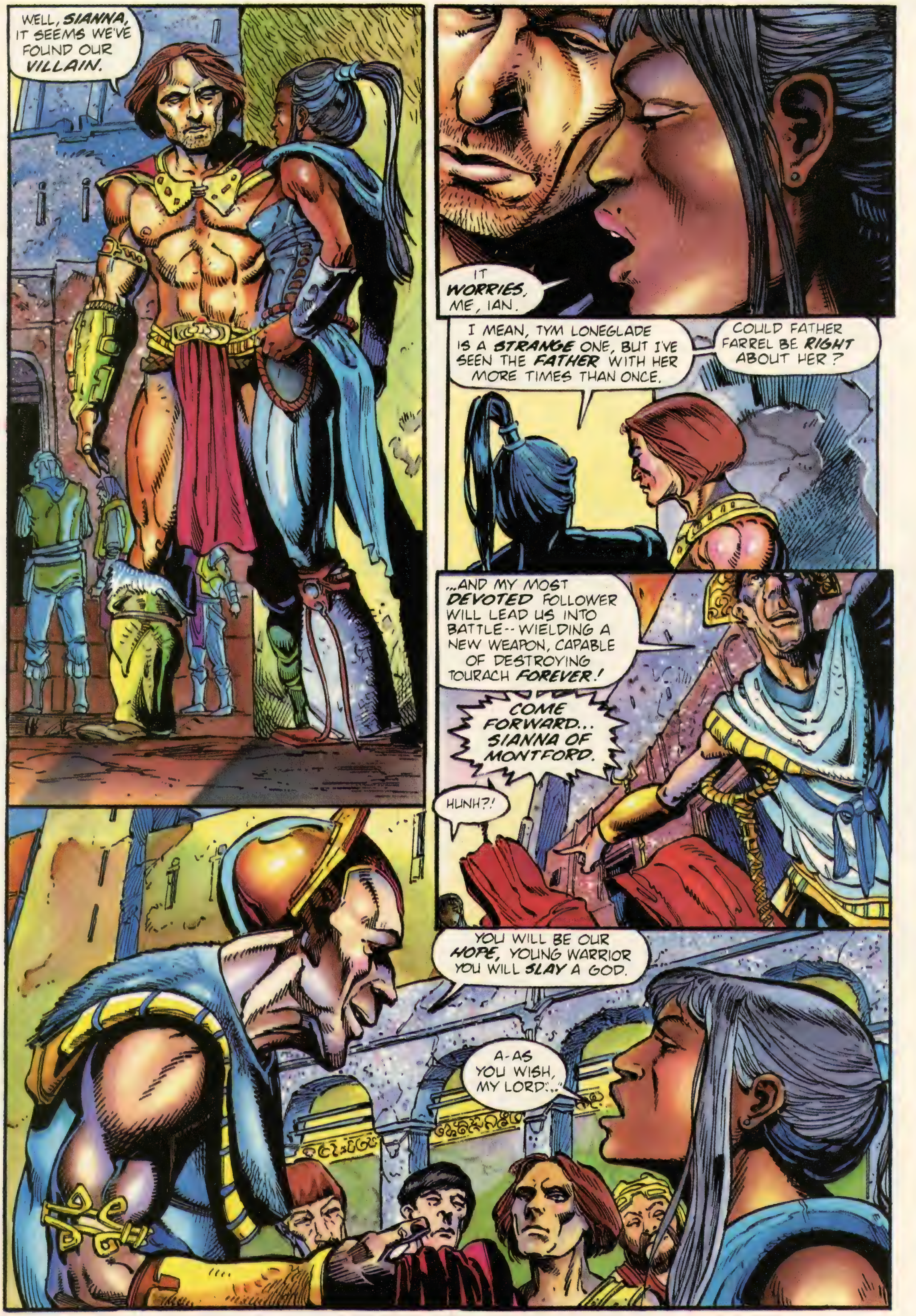

CROPS WILL FAIL, CITIES FALL. THE BOUNTIFUL PLAINS OF ICATIA WILL BE A WASTELAND.
NONE CAN ESCAPE THE DESOLATION TO COME.
THE FALSE GOD HATES ALL OF US WHO ARE BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT.

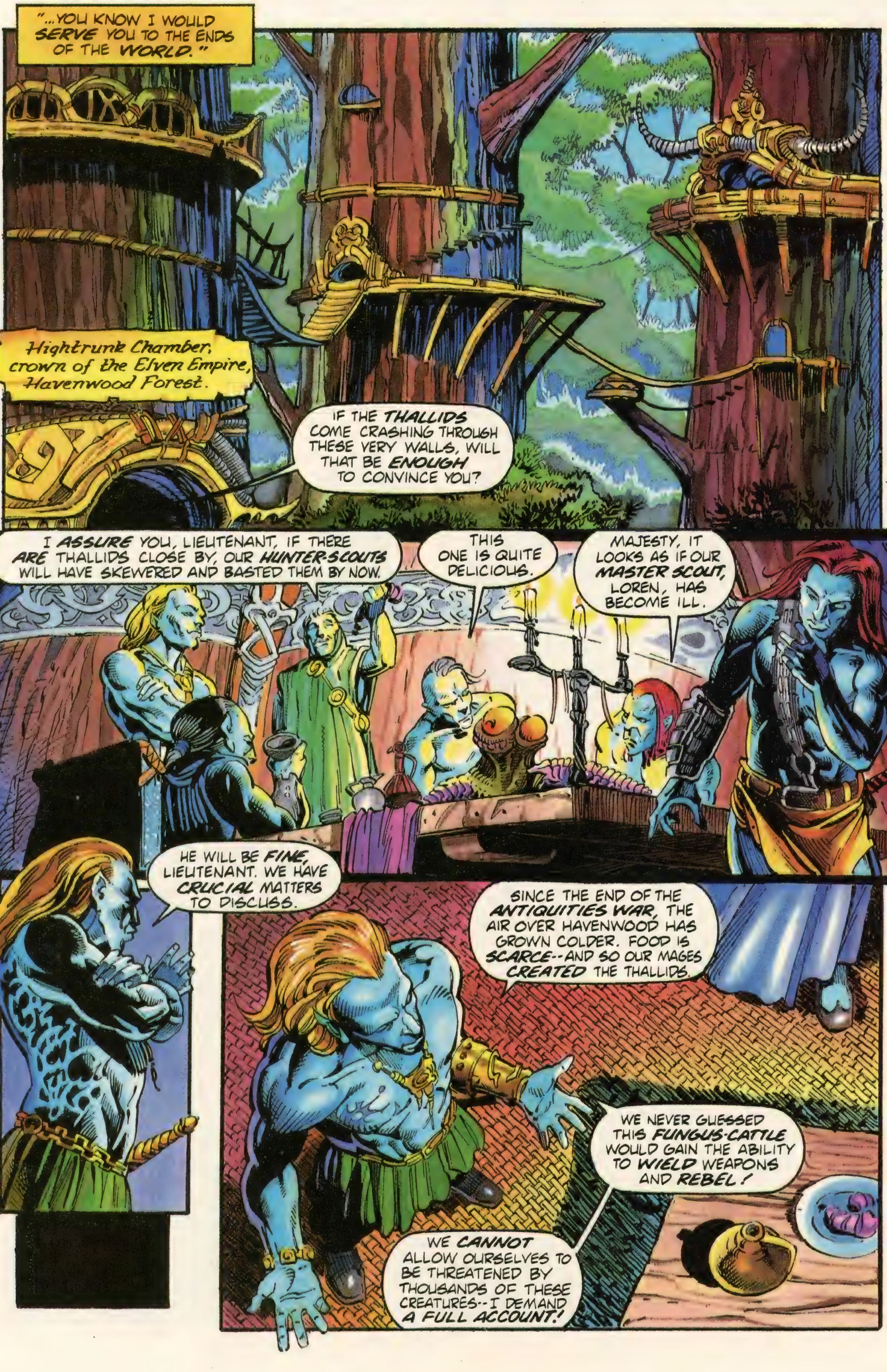

HE REJOICES TO SEE YOUR HARD-BUILT LIVES CRUMBLING INTO CORRUPTION AROUND YOU.
YOU WILL GROVEL DAILY FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S LIVES.
YOU WILL BOW IN ABJECT SUBMISSION AT THE CLAWED FEET OF...

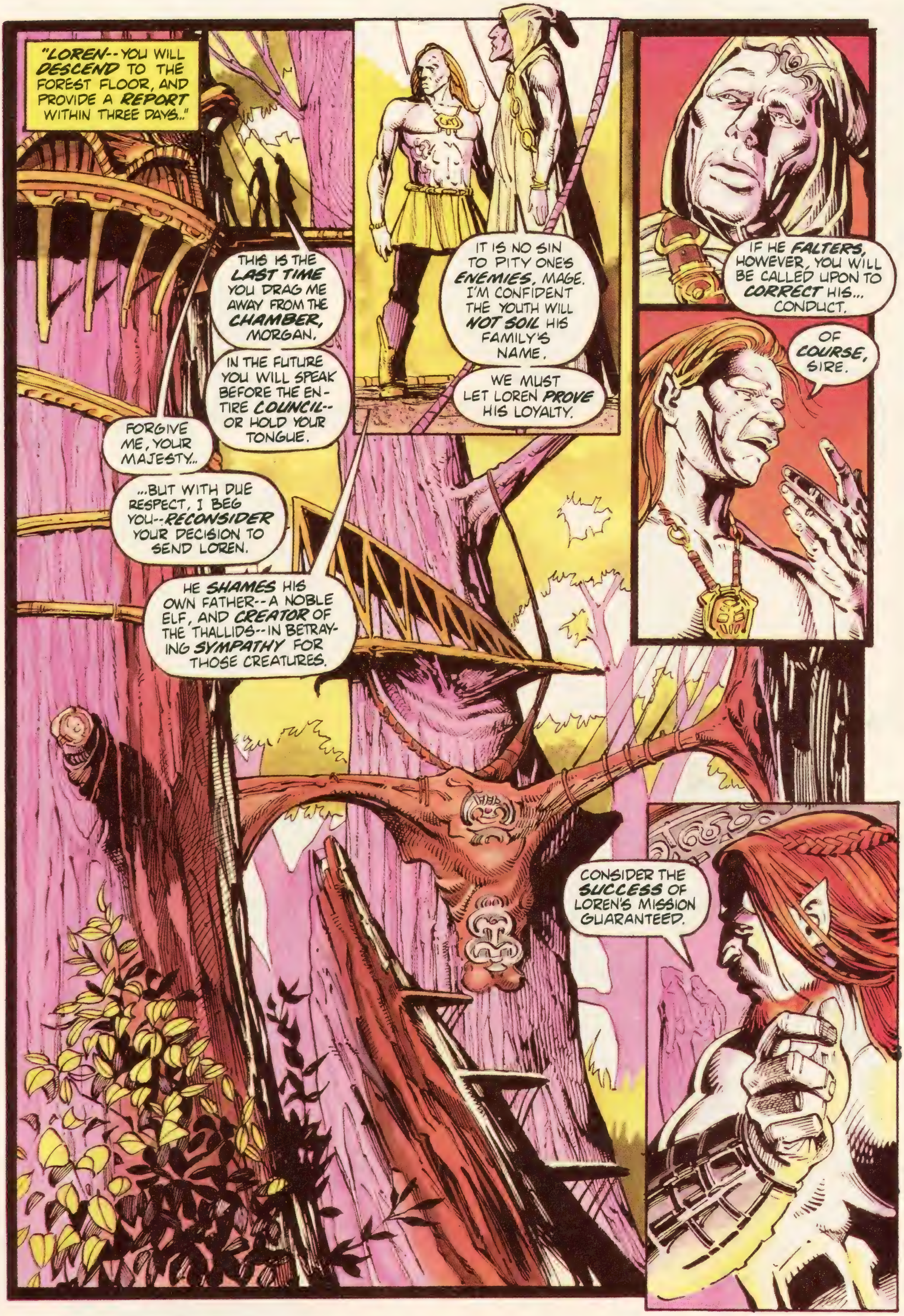

...TOURACH, THE DARK ONE!
BUT HOW CAN YOU *SAVE* YOURSELVES FROM EVIL'S APPROACH?
YOU DO NOT EVEN *KNOW* WHERE TO FOCUS YOUR FIGHT!
YOU ARE *STRONG.* YOUR HEARTS ARE IN THIS FIGHT-- BUT YOU MUST BE *HARNESSED* INTO A SINGLE FORCE.
WHO WILL *BE* THAT HARNESS?
YOU, FATHER!
HELP US FIGHT, *FATHER FARREL!*

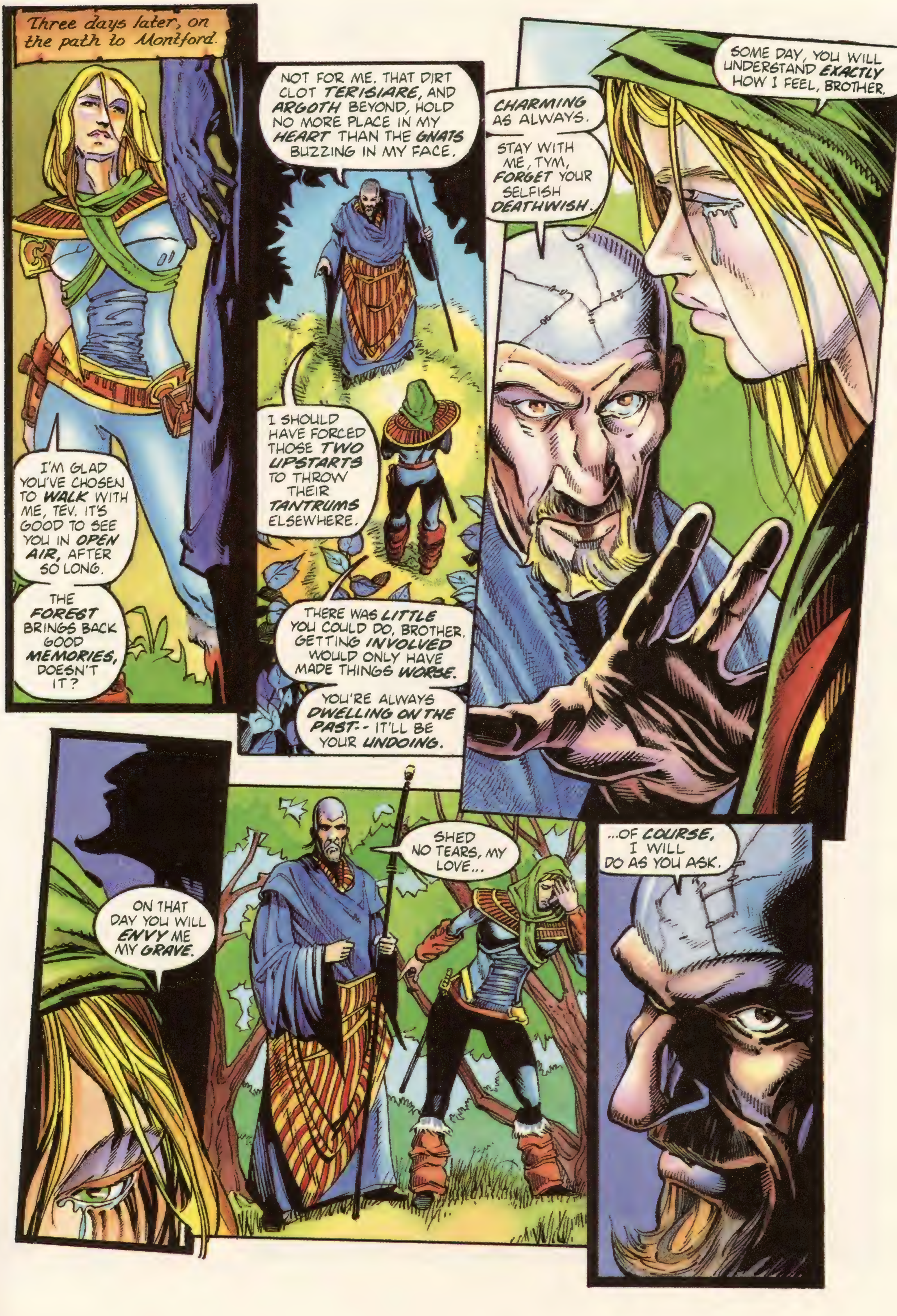

TOURACH'S DARK LEGION, *THE ORDER OF THE EBON HAND,* GATHERS EVEN AS WE SPEAK.
TWO DAYS AGO, THIS *BLASPHEMOUS* SYMBOL WAS TAKEN FROM THE NECK OF AN EBON HAND *SPY.*
HIS LAST WORDS-- *"TOURACH DWELLS AMONG US."*
MAKE NO MISTAKE, TOURACH *DOES* LIVE, NOT IN THE DARK FORM OF SOME GROTESQUE BEAST, BUT IN THE *FALSE* LIKENESS OF A BEAUTIFUL, INNOCENT *GIRL.*

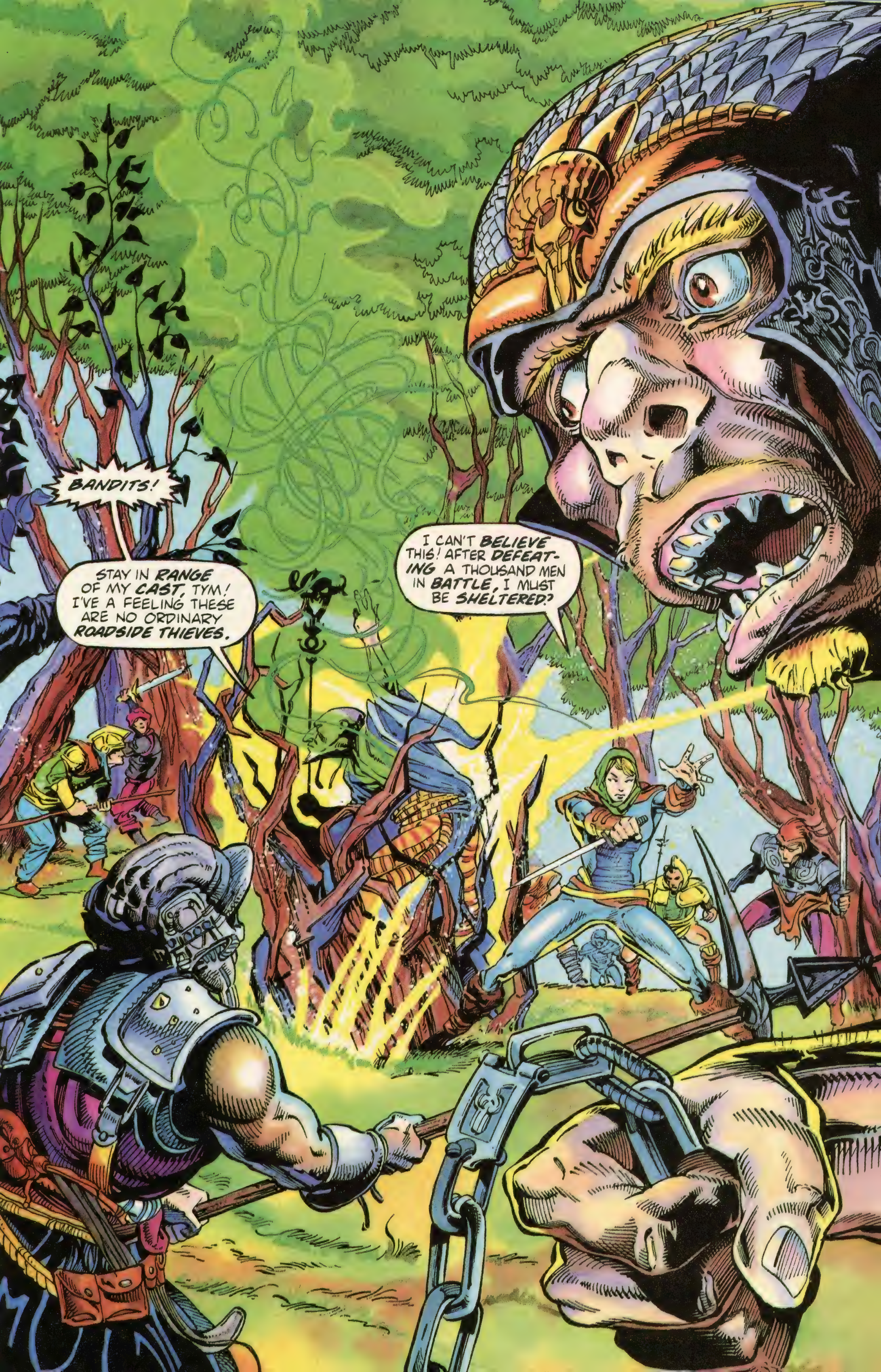

TYMOLIN LONEGLADE IS TOURACH INCARNATE!
EVEN OUR *ANCIENTS* CANNOT RECALL THE DAY SHE WAS BORN.
CAN YOU REMEMBER HER AGING *ONE* YEAR?
TOURACH PLOTS THE *DOWNFALL* OF OUR PEOPLE.
JOIN ME IN *DESTROYING* HIS LIVING INCARNATION!

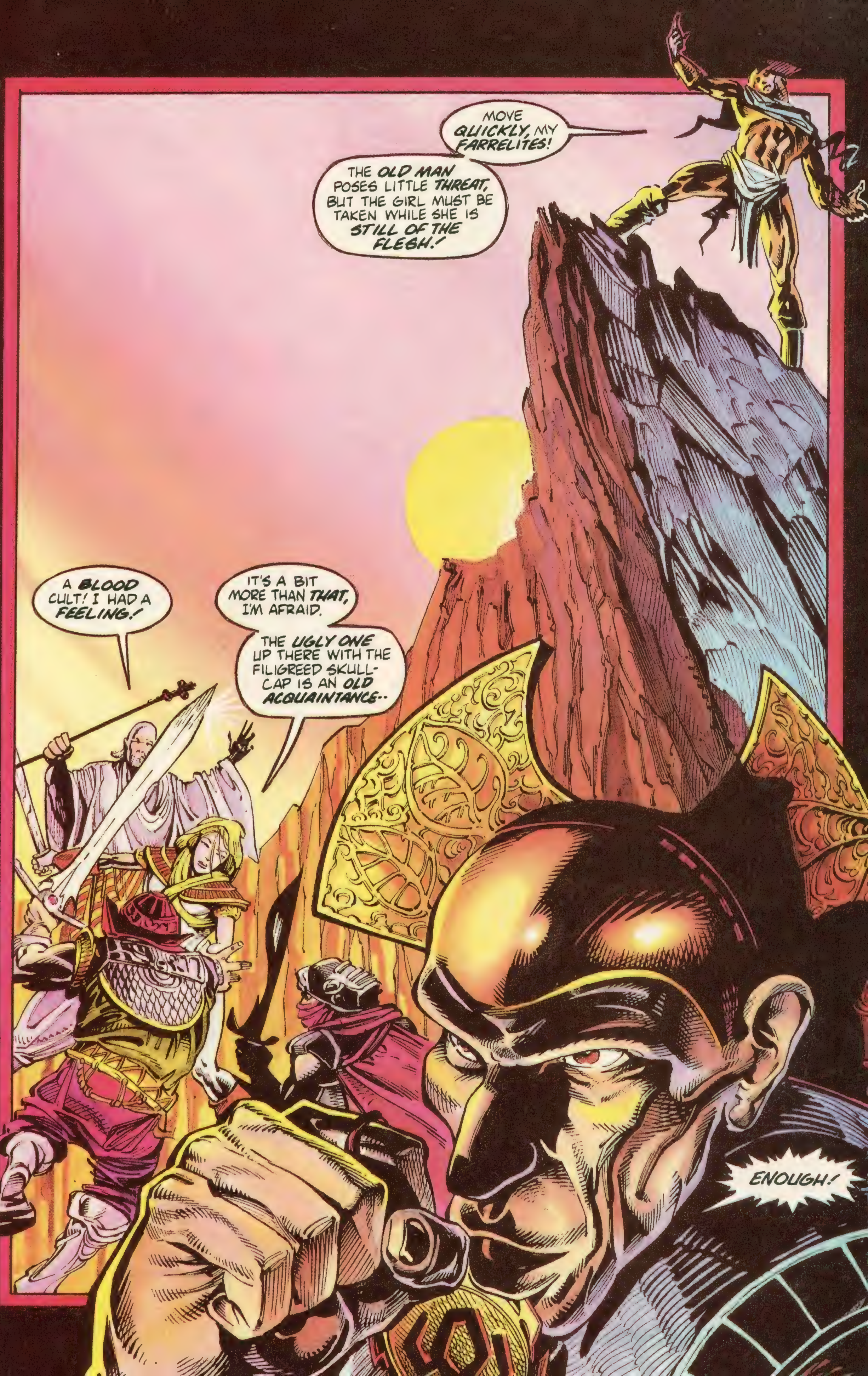

WELL, SIANNA, IT SEEMS WE'VE FOUND OUR VILLAIN.
IT WORRIES ME, IAN.
I MEAN, TYM LONEGLADE IS A STRANGE ONE, BUT I'VE SEEN THE FATHER WITH HER MORE TIMES THAN ONCE.
COULD FATHER FARREL BE RIGHT ABOUT HER?
...AND MY MOST DEVOTED FOLLOWER WILL LEAD US INTO BATTLE-- WIELDING A NEW WEAPON, CAPABLE OF DESTROYING TOURACH FOREVER!
COME FORWARD... SIANNA OF MONTFORD.
HUNH?!
YOU WILL BE OUR HOPE, YOUNG WARRIOR YOU WILL SLAY A GOD.
A-AS YOU WISH, MY LORD...

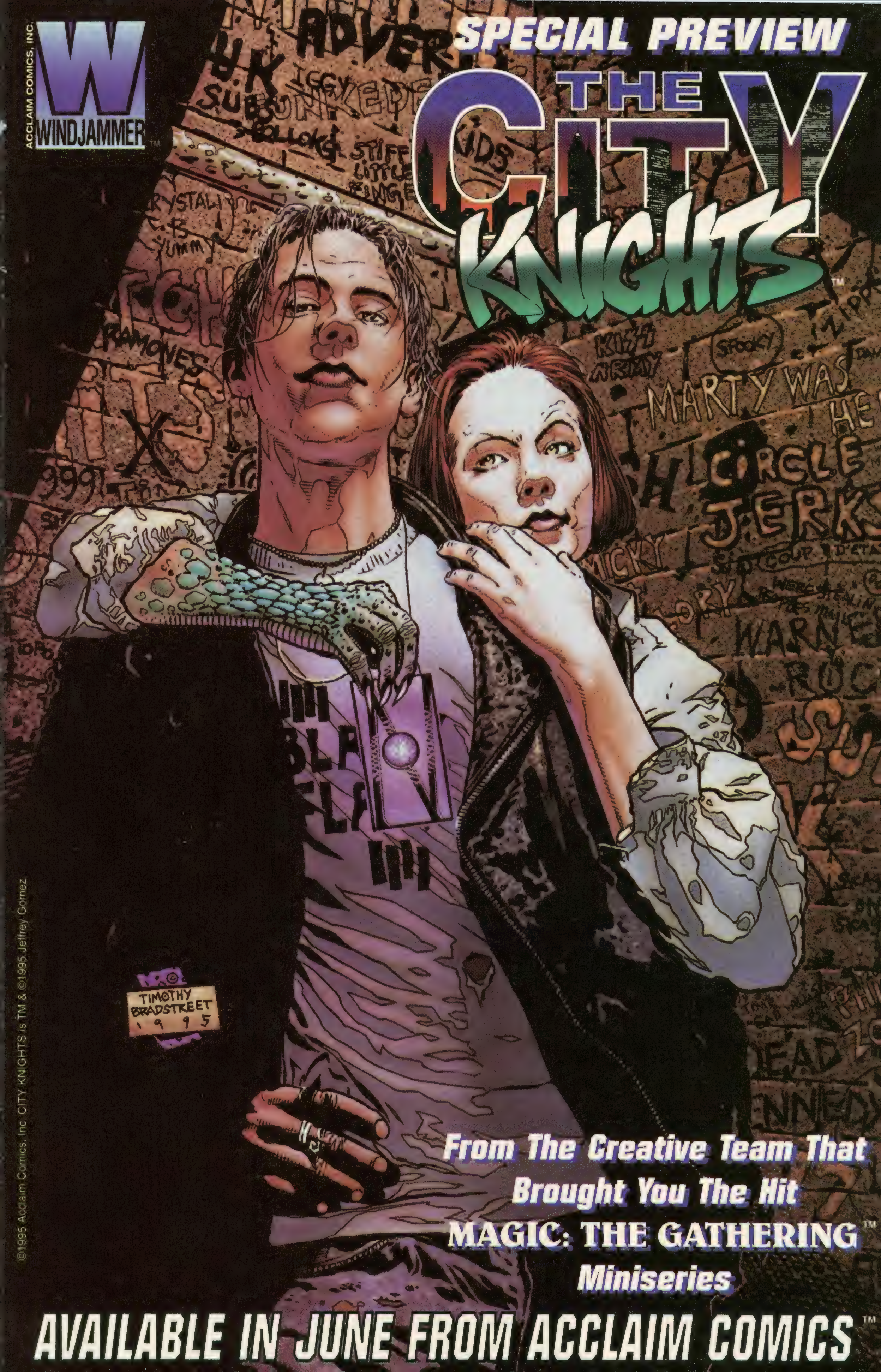

"...YOU KNOW I WOULD SERVE YOU TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."
Hightrunk Chamber, crown of the Elven Empire, Havenwood Forest.
IF THE THALLIDS COME CRASHING THROUGH THESE VERY WALLS, WILL THAT BE ENOUGH TO CONVINCE YOU?
I ASSURE YOU, LIEUTENANT, IF THERE ARE THALLIDS CLOSE BY, OUR HUNTER-SCOUTS WILL HAVE SKEWERED AND BASTED THEM BY NOW.
THIS ONE IS QUITE DELICIOUS.
MAJESTY, IT LOOKS AS IF OUR MASTER SCOUT, LOREN, HAS BECOME ILL.
HE WILL BE FINE, LIEUTENANT. WE HAVE CRUCIAL MATTERS TO DISCUSS.
SINCE THE END OF THE ANTIQUITIES WAR, THE AIR OVER HAVENWOOD HAS GROWN COLDER. FOOD IS SCARCE--AND SO OUR MAGES CREATED THE THALLIDS.
WE NEVER GUESSED THIS FUNGUS-CATTLE WOULD GAIN THE ABILITY TO WIELD WEAPONS AND REBEL!
WE CANNOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE THREATENED BY THOUSANDS OF THESE CREATURES--I DEMAND A FULL ACCOUNT!


"LOREN--YOU WILL DESCEND TO THE FOREST FLOOR, AND PROVIDE A REPORT WITHIN THREE DAYS..."
THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU DRAG ME AWAY FROM THE CHAMBER, MORGAN.
IN THE FUTURE YOU WILL SPEAK BEFORE THE ENTIRE COUNCIL--OR HOLD YOUR TONGUE.
FORGIVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY...
...BUT WITH DUE RESPECT, I BEG YOU--RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION TO SEND LOREN.
HE SHAMES HIS OWN FATHER--A NOBLE ELF, AND CREATOR OF THE THALLIDS--IN BETRAYING SYMPATHY FOR THOSE CREATURES.
IT IS NO SIN TO PITY ONE'S ENEMIES, MAGE. I'M CONFIDENT THE YOUTH WILL NOT SOIL HIS FAMILY'S NAME.
WE MUST LET LOREN PROVE HIS LOYALTY.
IF HE FALTERS, HOWEVER, YOU WILL BE CALLED UPON TO CORRECT HIS... CONDUCT.
OF COURSE, SIRE.
CONSIDER THE SUCCESS OF LOREN'S MISSION GUARANTEED.


Three days later, on the path to Montford.
I'M GLAD YOU'VE CHOSEN TO WALK WITH ME, TEV. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU IN OPEN AIR, AFTER SO LONG.
THE FOREST BRINGS BACK GOOD MEMORIES, DOESN'T IT?
NOT FOR ME. THAT DIRT CLOT TERISIARE, AND ARGOTH BEYOND, HOLD NO MORE PLACE IN MY HEART THAN THE GNATS BUZZING IN MY FACE.
I SHOULD HAVE FORCED THOSE TWO UPSTARTS TO THROW THEIR TANTRUMS ELSEWHERE.
THERE WAS LITTLE YOU COULD DO, BROTHER. GETTING INVOLVED WOULD ONLY HAVE MADE THINGS WORSE.
YOU'RE ALWAYS DWELLING ON THE PAST-- IT'LL BE YOUR UNDOING.
CHARMING AS ALWAYS.
STAY WITH ME, TYM, FORGET YOUR SELFISH DEATHWISH.
SOME DAY, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW I FEEL, BROTHER.
ON THAT DAY YOU WILL ENVY ME MY GRAVE.
SHED NO TEARS, MY LOVE...
...OF COURSE, I WILL DO AS YOU ASK.


BANDITS!
STAY IN RANGE OF MY CAST, TYM! I'VE A FEELING THESE ARE NO ORDINARY ROADSIDE THIEVES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! AFTER DEFEATING A THOUSAND MEN IN BATTLE, I MUST BE SHELTERED?


MOVE *QUICKLY*, MY *FARRELITES*!
THE *OLD MAN* POSES LITTLE *THREAT*, BUT THE GIRL MUST BE TAKEN WHILE SHE IS *STILL OF THE FLESH*!
A *BLOOD* CULT! I HAD A *FEELING*!
IT'S A BIT MORE THAN *THAT*, I'M AFRAID.
THE *UGLY ONE* UP THERE WITH THE FILIGREED SKULL-CAP IS AN *OLD ACQUAINTANCE*..
ENOUGH!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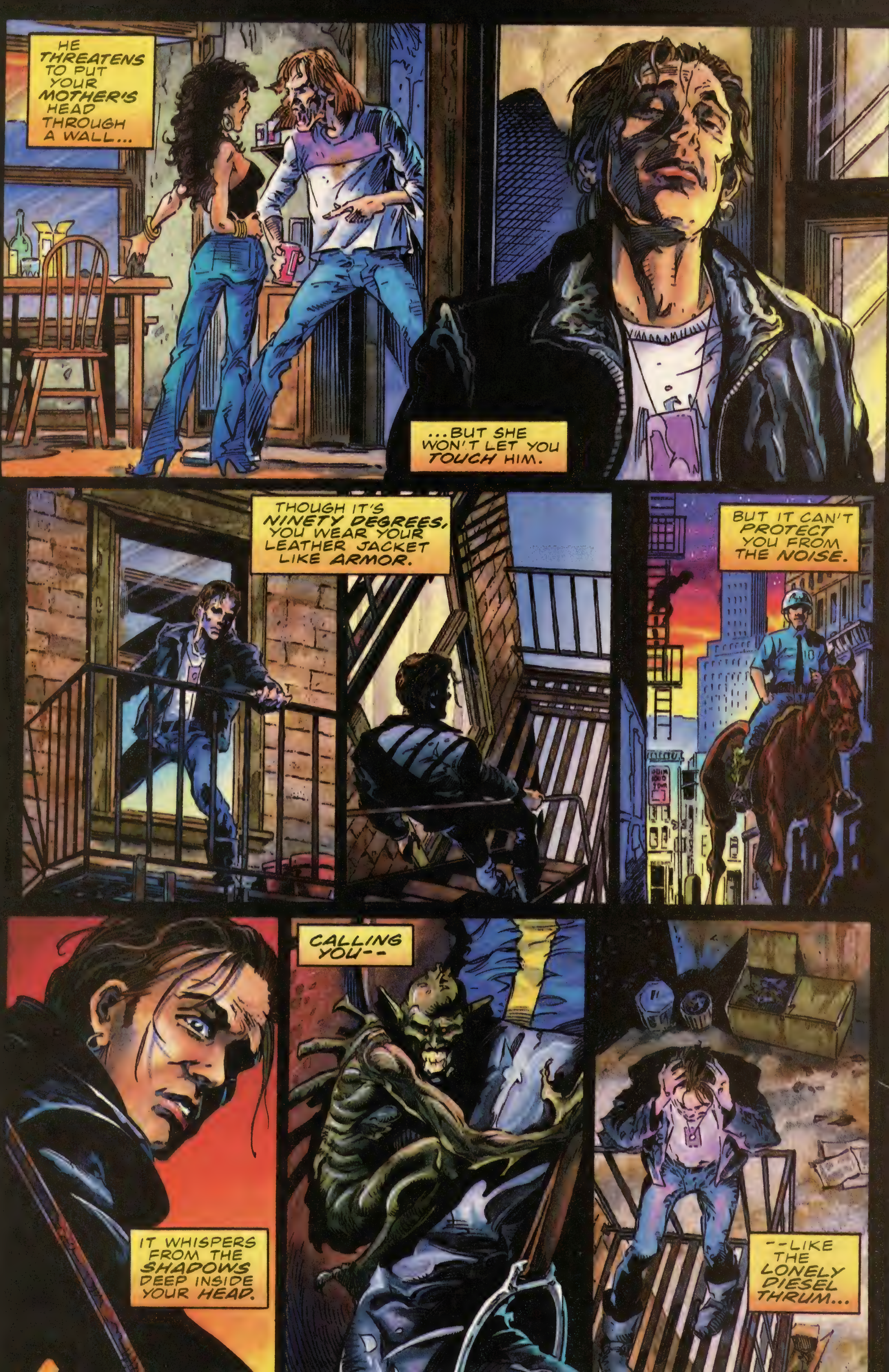
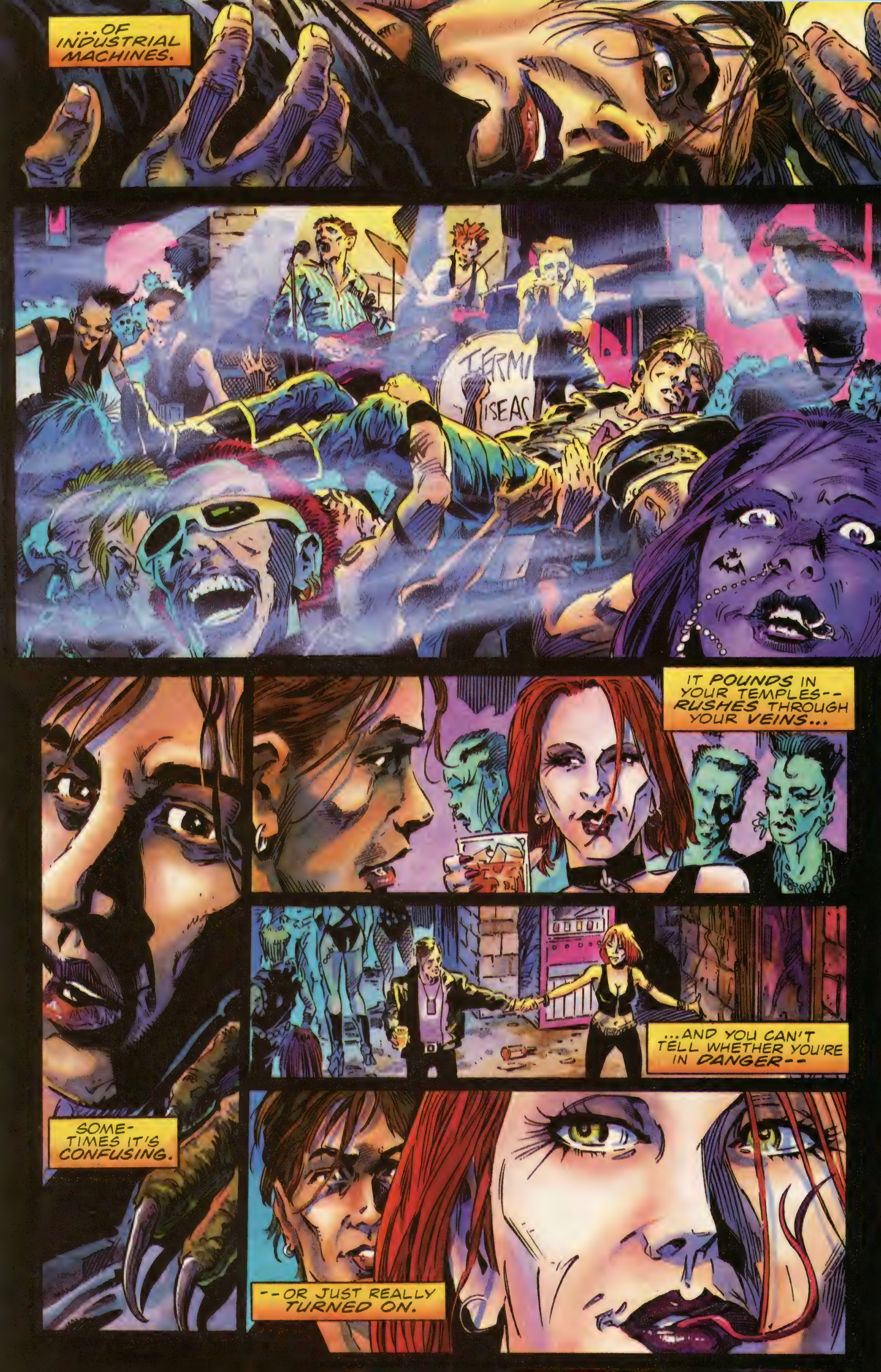
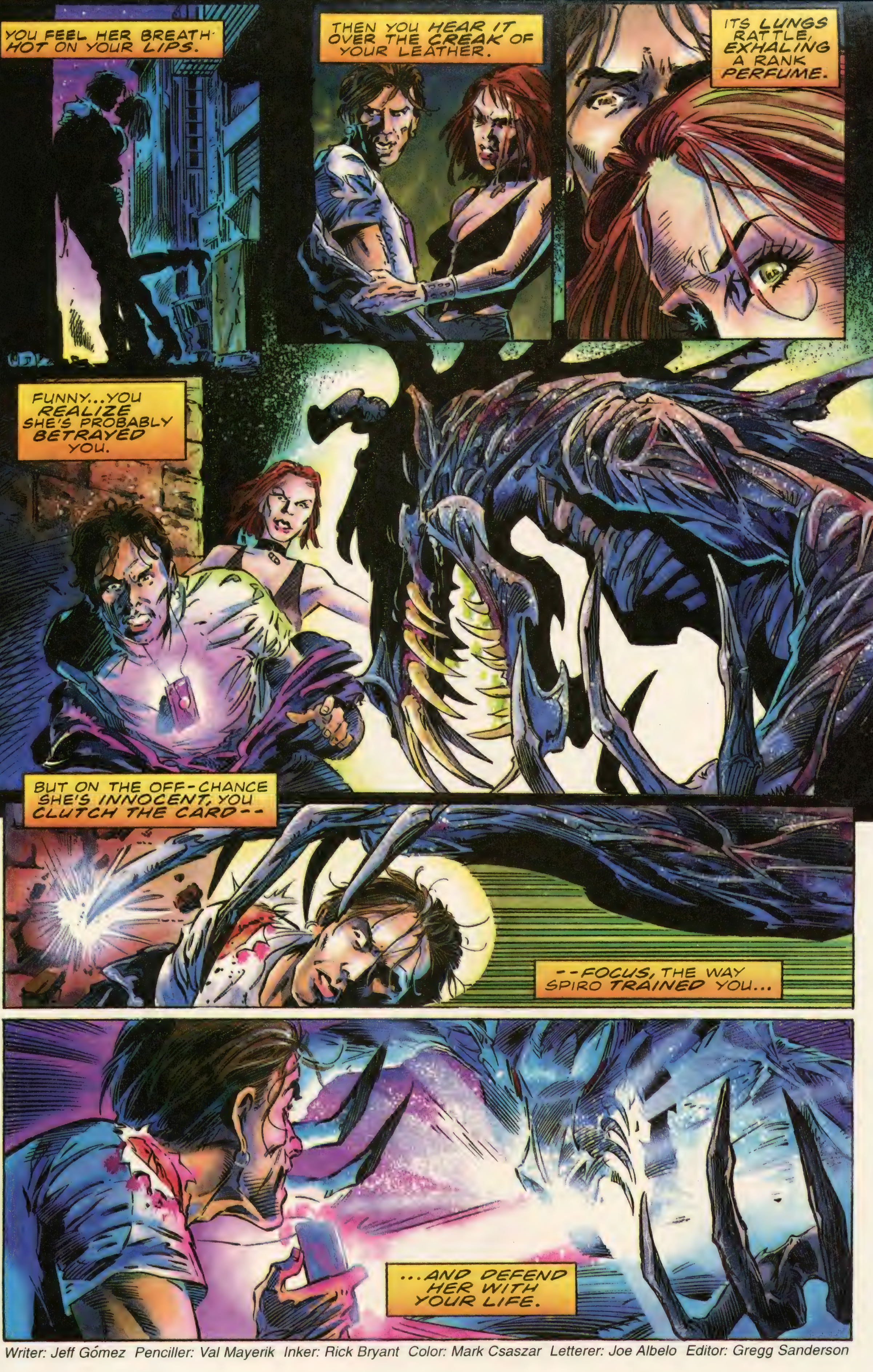
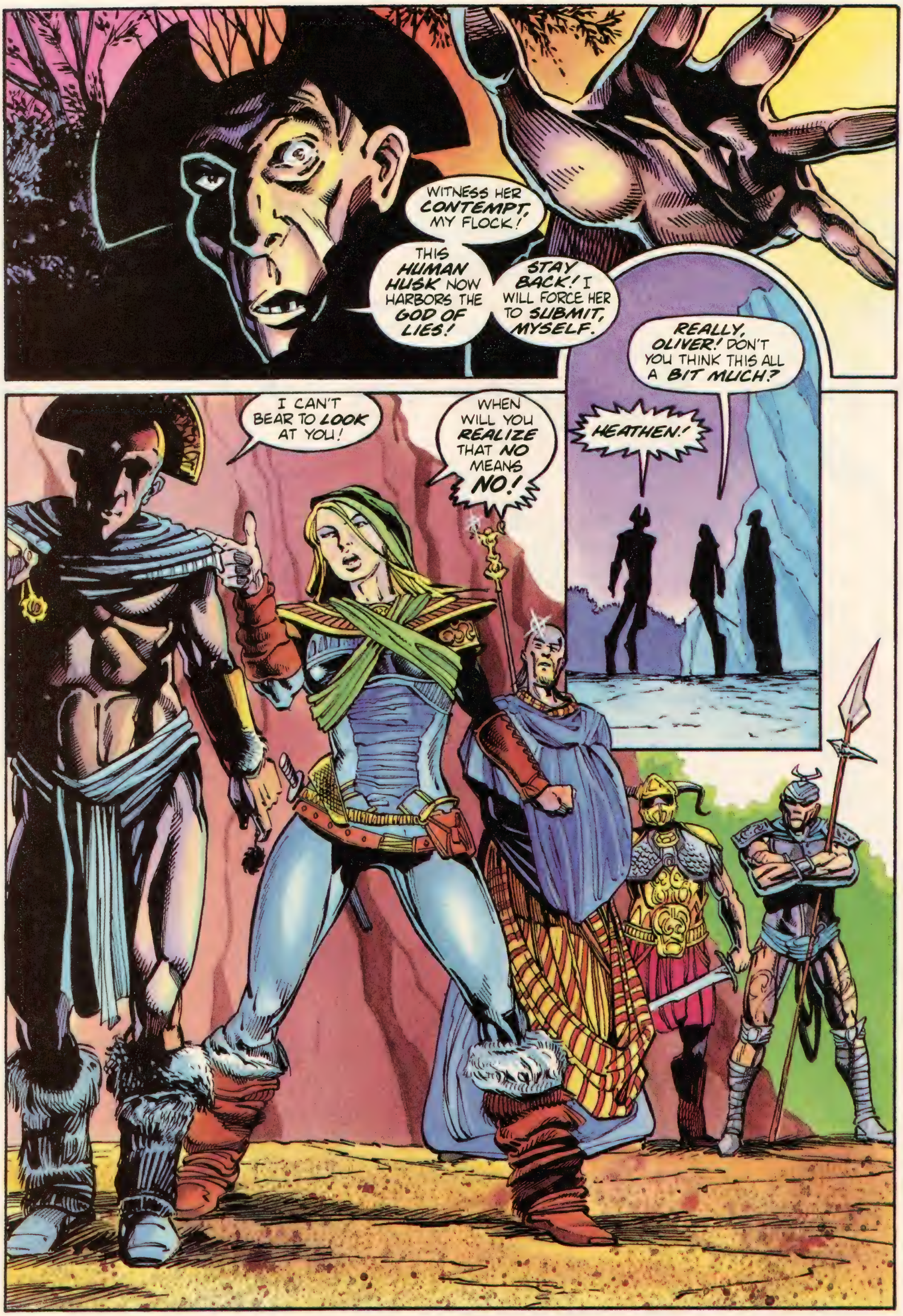
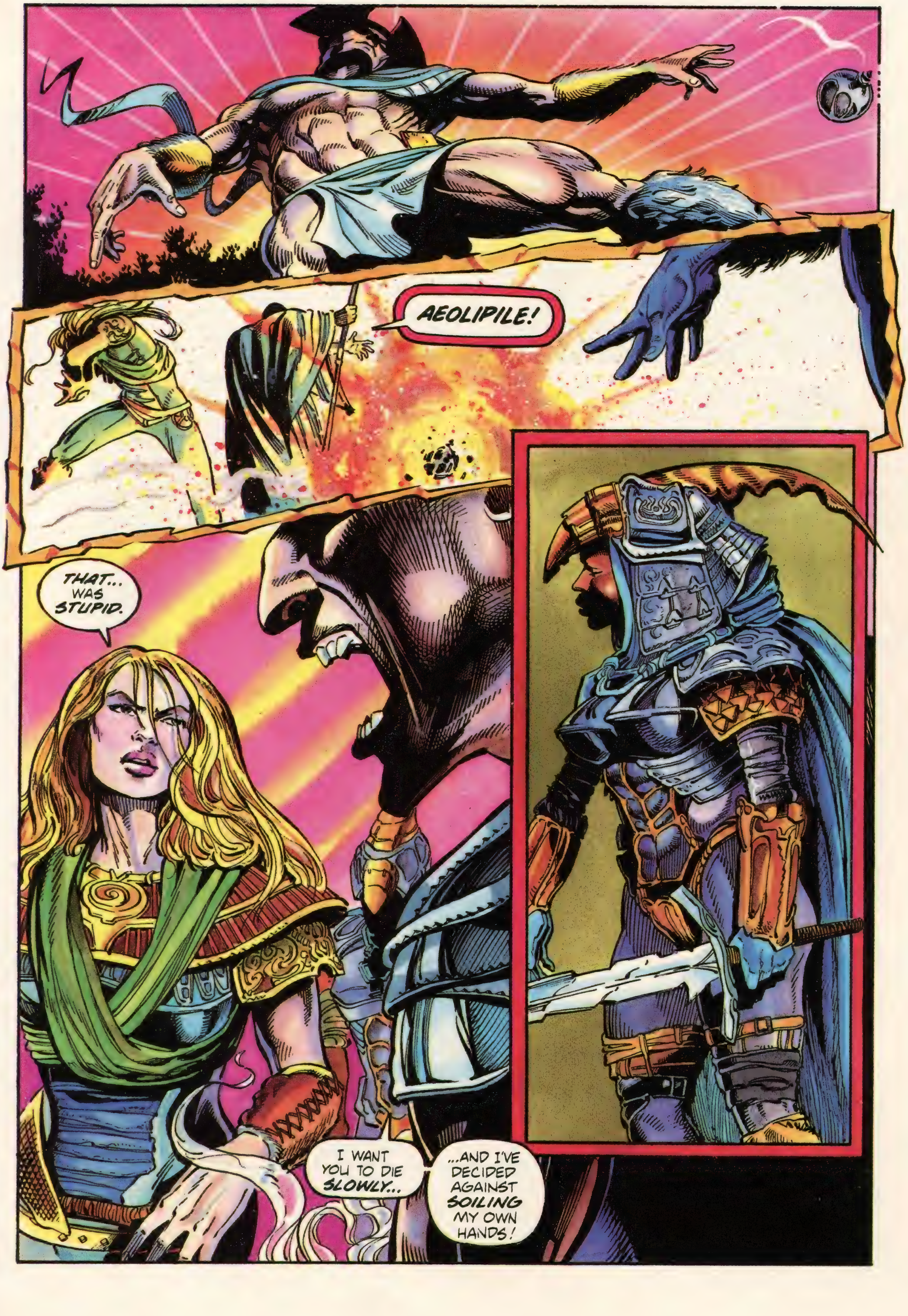

HE THREATENS TO PUT YOUR MOTHER'S HEAD THROUGH A WALL...
...BUT SHE WON'T LET YOU TOUCH HIM.
THOUGH IT'S NINETY DEGREES, YOU WEAR YOUR LEATHER JACKET LIKE ARMOR.
BUT IT CAN'T PROTECT YOU FROM THE NOISE.
IT WHISPERS FROM THE SHADOWS DEEP INSIDE YOUR HEAD.
CALLING YOU--
--LIKE THE LONELY DIESEL THRUM...

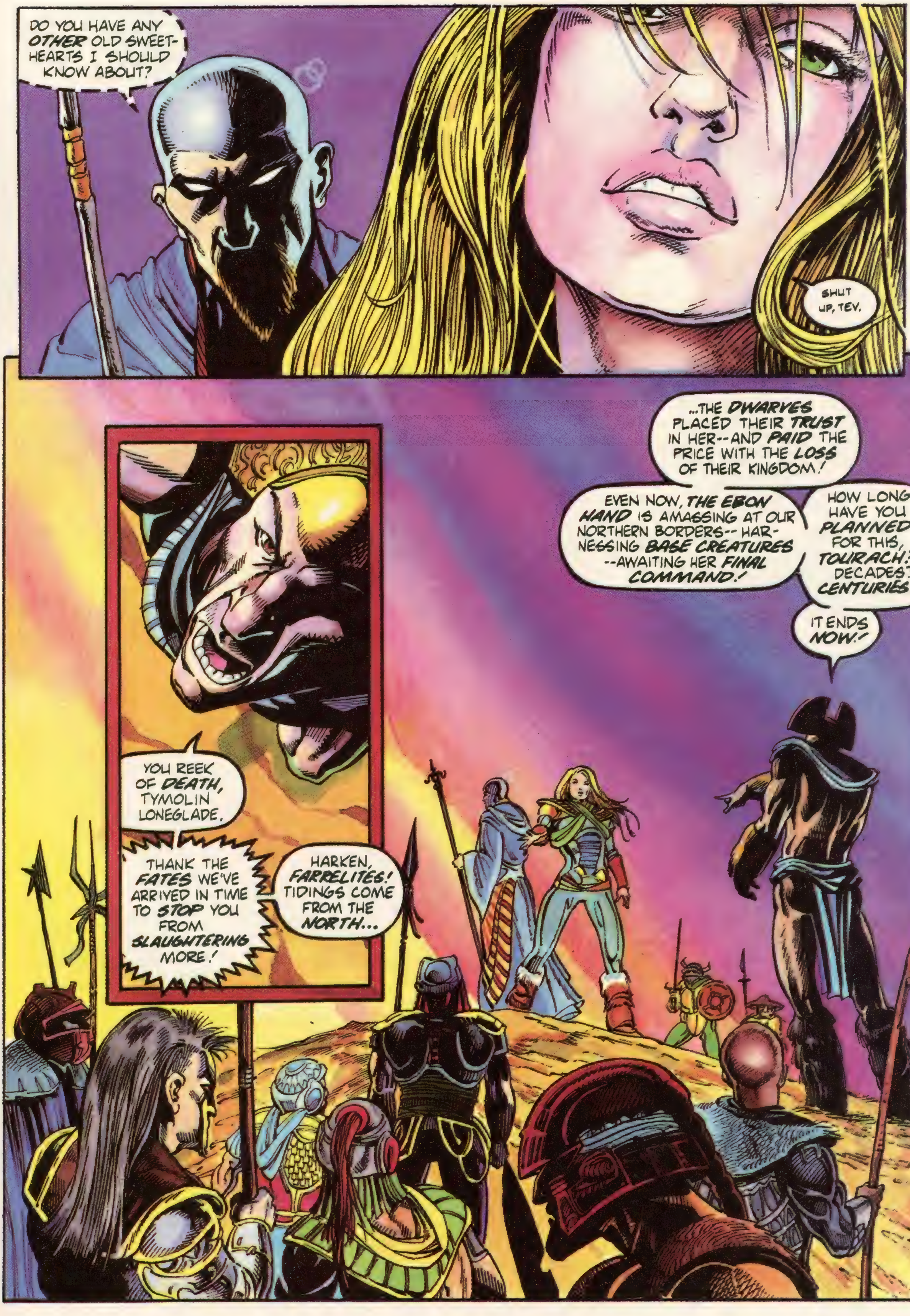

...OF INDUSTRIAL MACHINES.
TERMI
ISEAC
IT POUNDS IN YOUR TEMPLES-- RUSHES THROUGH YOUR VEINS...
...AND YOU CAN'T TELL WHETHER YOU'RE IN DANGER--
SOME-TIMES IT'S CONFUSING.
--OR JUST REALLY TURNED ON.

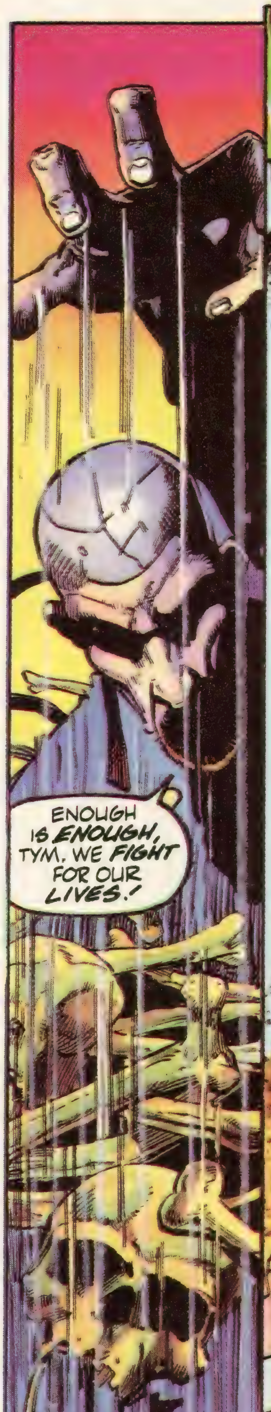

YOU FEEL HER BREATH HOT ON YOUR LIPS.
THEN YOU HEAR IT OVER THE CREAK OF YOUR LEATHER.
ITS LUNGS RATTLE, EXHALING A RANK PERFUME.
FUNNY...YOU REALIZE SHE'S PROBABLY BETRAYED YOU.
BUT ON THE OFF-CHANCE SHE'S INNOCENT, YOU CLUTCH THE CARD--
--FOCUS, THE WAY SPIRO TRAINED YOU...
...AND DEFEND HER WITH YOUR LIFE.

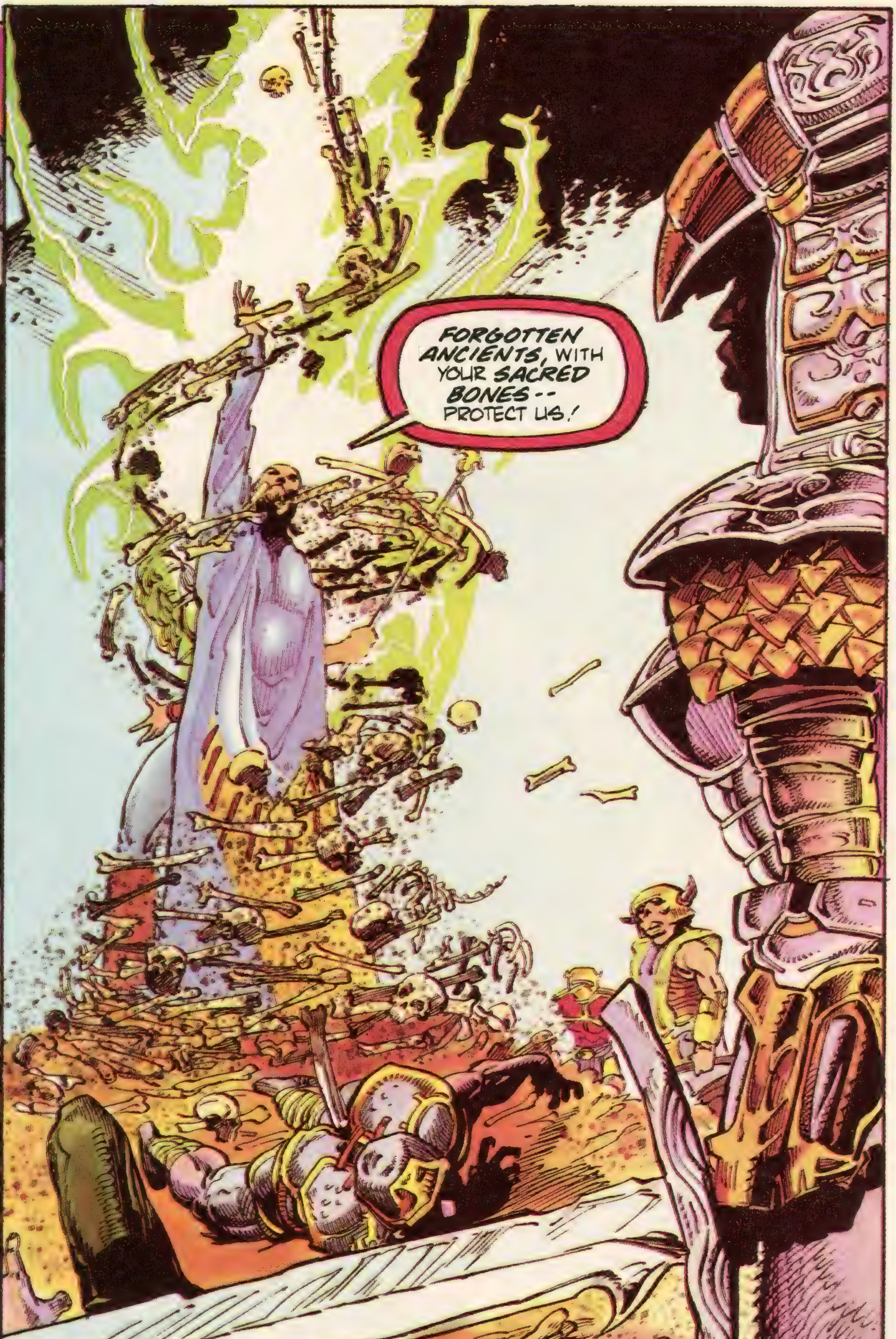
Writer: Jeff Gómez Penciller: Val Mayerik Inker: Rick Bryant Color: Mark Csaszar Letterer: Joe Albelo Editor: Gregg Sanderson

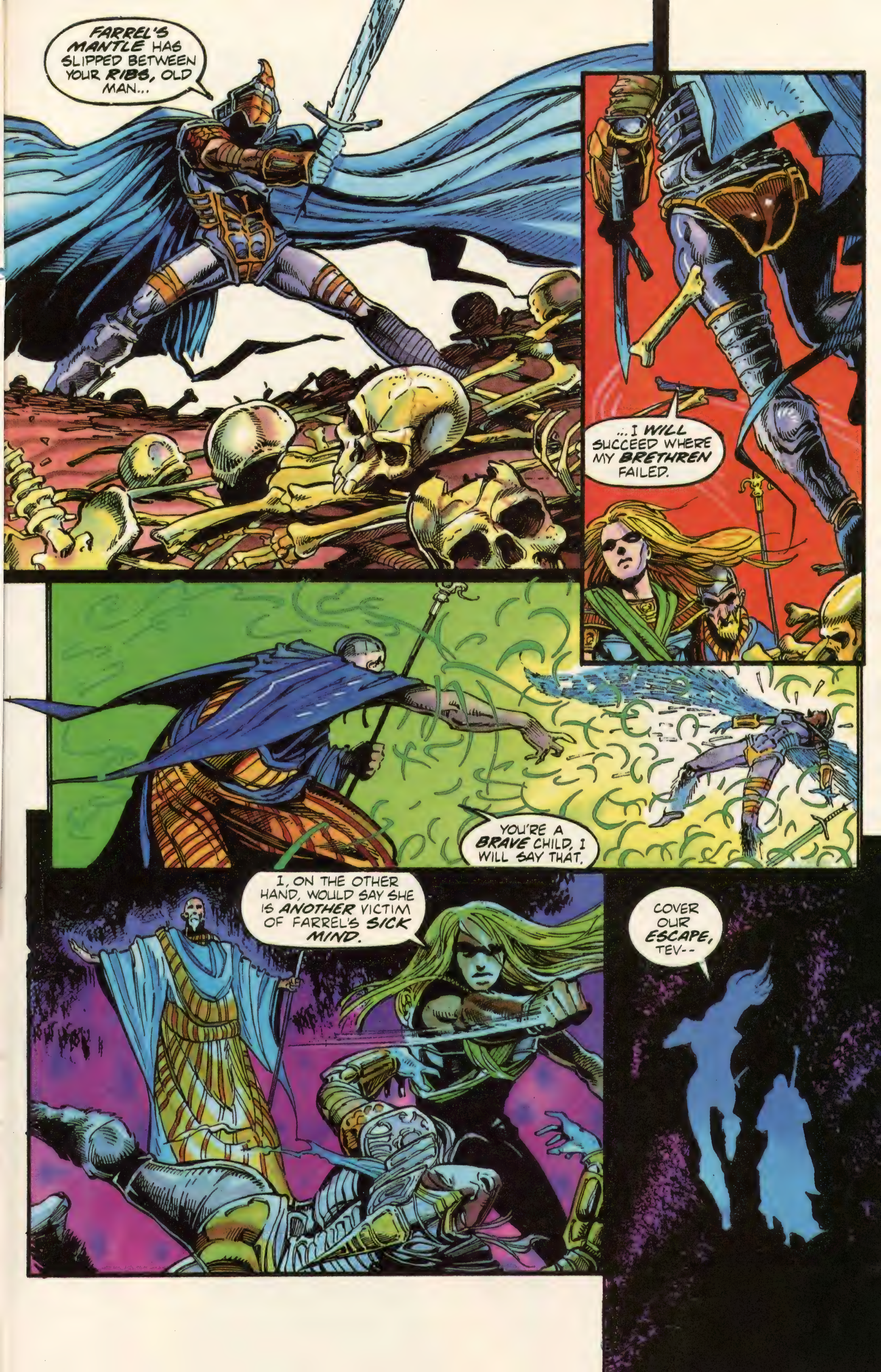

WITNESS HER **CONTEMPT,** MY FLOCK!
THIS **HUMAN HUSK** NOW HARBORS THE **GOD OF LIES!**
STAY BACK! I WILL FORCE HER TO **SUBMIT, MYSELF.**
I CAN'T BEAR TO **LOOK** AT YOU!
WHEN WILL YOU **REALIZE** THAT **NO** MEANS **NO!**
REALLY, OLIVER! DON'T YOU THINK THIS ALL A **BIT MUCH?**
HEATHEN!

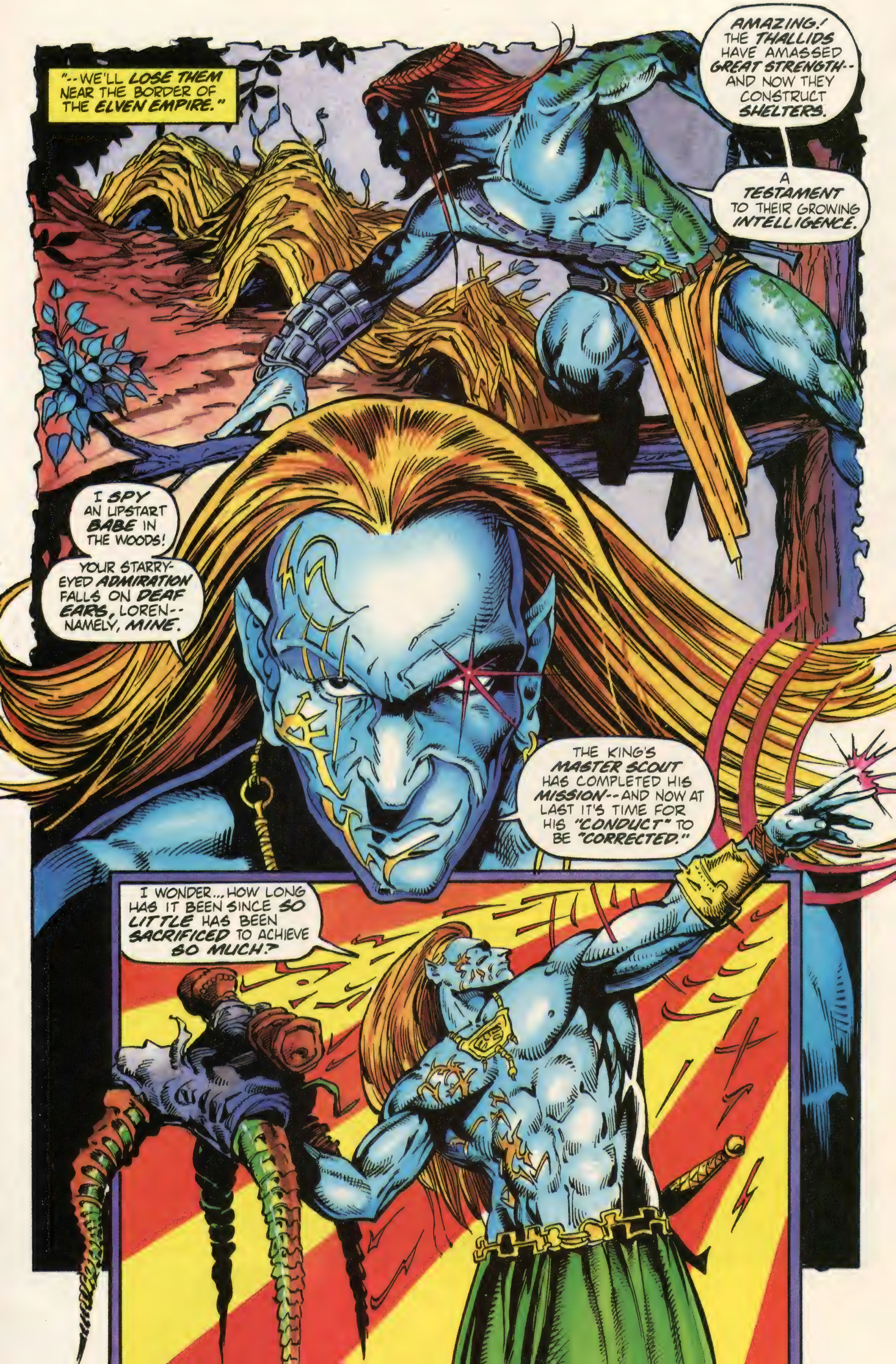

AEOLIPILE!
THAT... WAS STUPID.
I WANT YOU TO DIE SLOWLY...
...AND I'VE DECIDED AGAINST SOILING MY OWN HANDS!

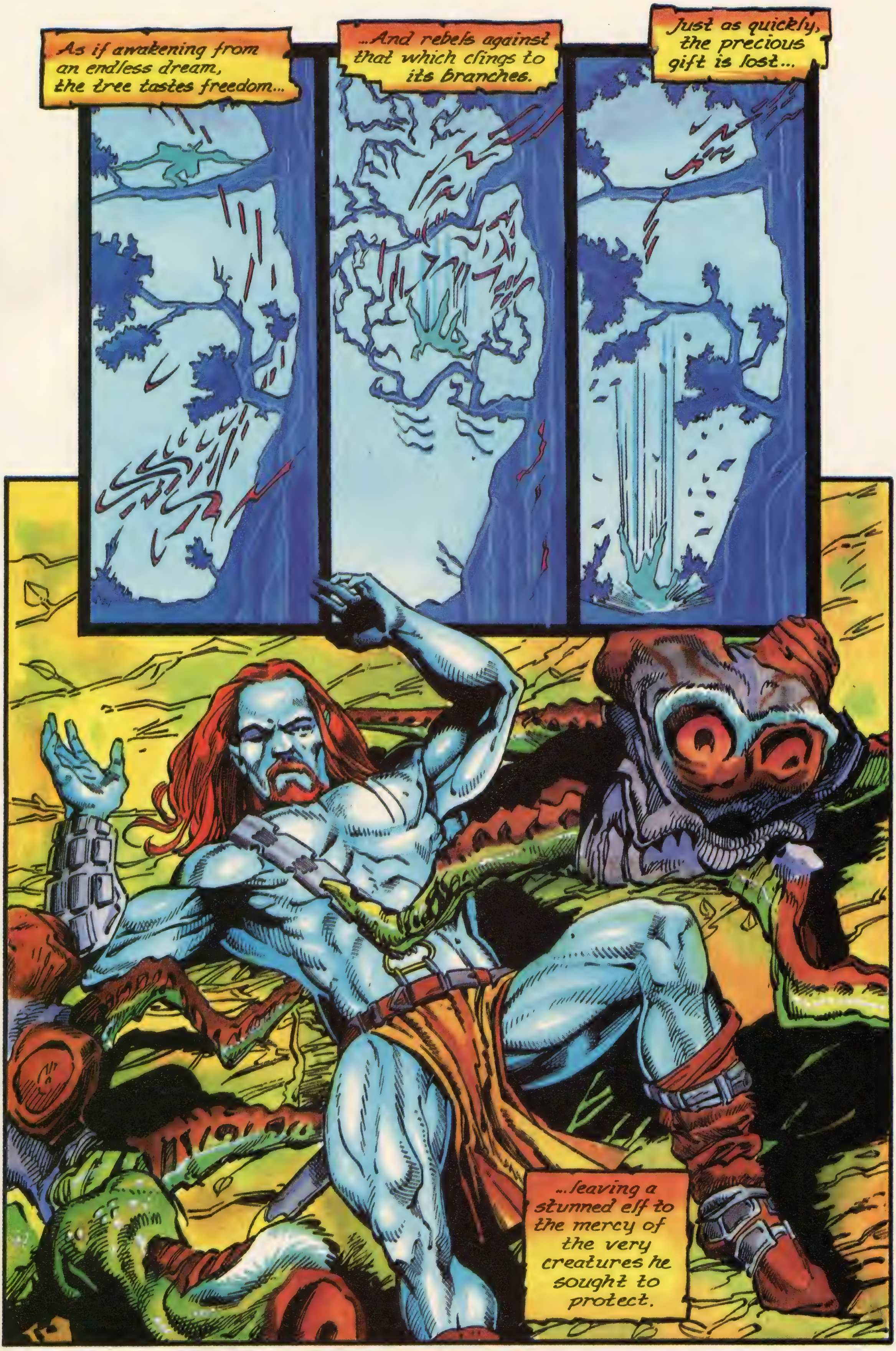

DO YOU HAVE ANY *OTHER* OLD SWEETHEARTS I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?
SHUT UP, TEV.
YOU REEK OF *DEATH*, TYMOLIN LONEGLADE.
THANK THE *FATES* WE'VE ARRIVED IN TIME TO *STOP* YOU FROM *SLAUGHTERING* MORE!
HARKEN, *FARRELITES!* TIDINGS COME FROM THE *NORTH...*
...THE *DWARVES* PLACED THEIR *TRUST* IN HER--AND *PAID* THE PRICE WITH THE *LOSS* OF THEIR KINGDOM!
EVEN NOW, *THE EBON HAND* IS AMASSING AT OUR NORTHERN BORDERS--HARNESSING *BASE CREATURES* --AWAITING HER *FINAL COMMAND!*
HOW LONG HAVE YOU *PLANNED* FOR THIS, *TOURACH?* DECADES? *CENTURIES?*
IT ENDS *NOW!*

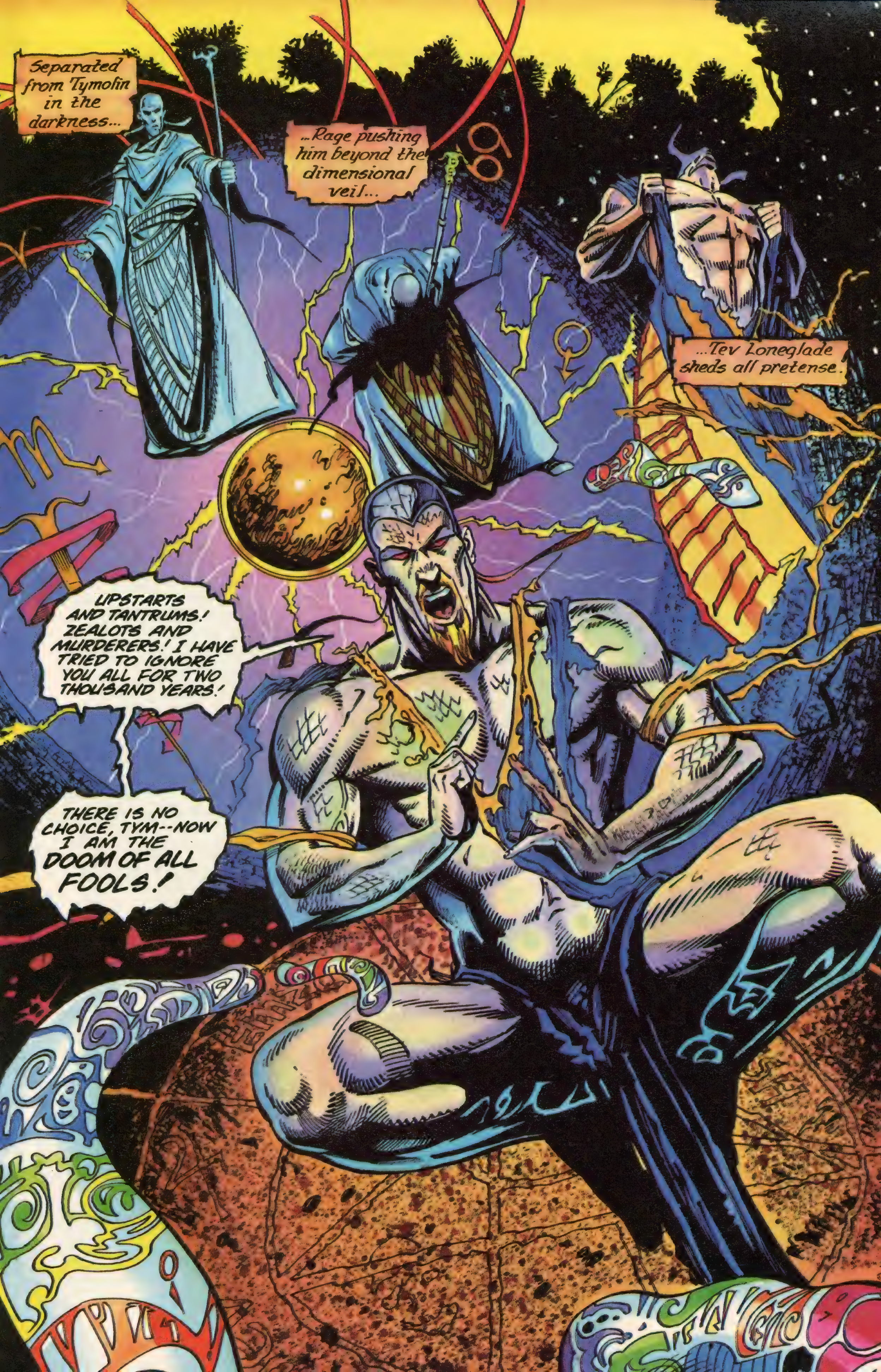

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, TYM. WE FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES!

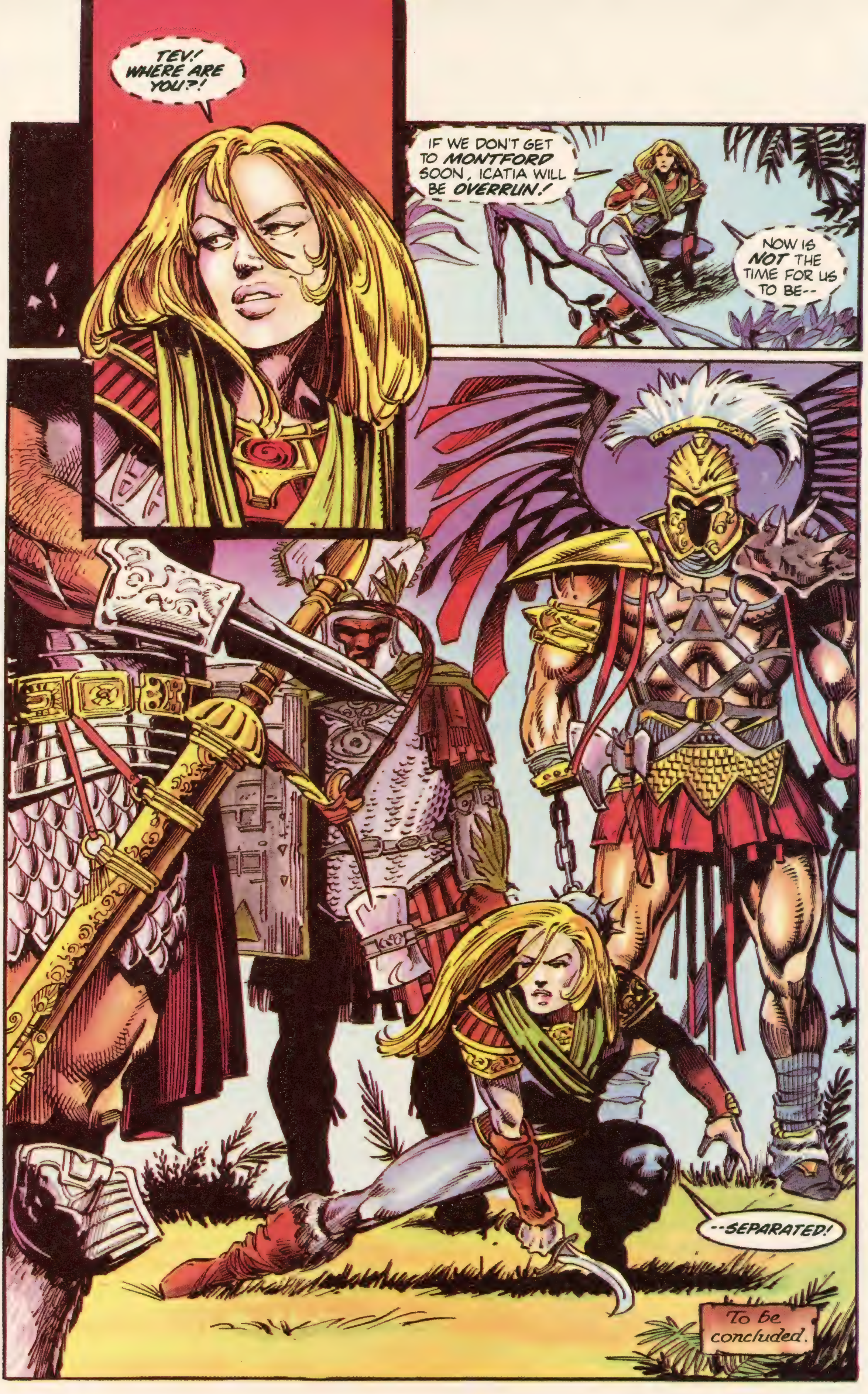

FORGOTTEN ANCIENTS, WITH YOUR SACRED BONES -- PROTECT US!
"GO, SIANNA! THE NECROMANCER'S PATHETIC CARRION WILL NOT STOP MY MOST COURAGEOUS DISCIPLE!"


FARREL'S MANTLE HAS SLIPPED BETWEEN YOUR RIBS, OLD MAN...
...I WILL SUCCEED WHERE MY BRETHREN FAILED.
YOU'RE A BRAVE CHILD, I WILL SAY THAT.
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD SAY SHE IS ANOTHER VICTIM OF FARREL'S SICK MIND.
COVER OUR ESCAPE, TEV--


"--WE'LL *LOSE THEM* NEAR THE BORDER OF THE *ELVEN EMPIRE.*"
AMAZING! THE *THALLIDS* HAVE AMASSED *GREAT STRENGTH*-- AND NOW THEY CONSTRUCT *SHELTERS*.
A *TESTAMENT* TO THEIR GROWING *INTELLIGENCE*.
I *SPY* AN UPSTART *BABE* IN THE WOODS!
YOUR STARRY-EYED *ADMIRATION* FALLS ON *DEAF EARS*, LOREN-- NAMELY, *MINE*.
THE KING'S *MASTER SCOUT* HAS COMPLETED HIS *MISSION*--AND NOW AT LAST IT'S TIME FOR HIS *"CONDUCT"* TO BE *"CORRECTED."*
I WONDER... HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE *SO LITTLE* HAS BEEN *SACRIFICED* TO ACHIEVE *SO MUCH?*


As if awakening from an endless dream, the tree tastes freedom...
...And rebels against that which clings to its branches.
Just as quickly, the precious gift is lost...
...leaving a stunned elf to the mercy of the very creatures he sought to protect.


Separated from Tymolin in the darkness...
...Rage pushing him beyond the dimensional veil...
...Tev Loneglade sheds all pretense.
UPSTARTS AND TANTRUMS! ZEALOTS AND MURDERERS! I HAVE TRIED TO IGNORE YOU ALL FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS!
THERE IS NO CHOICE, TYM--NOW I AM THE DOOM OF ALL FOOLS!


TEV! WHERE ARE YOU?!
IF WE DON'T GET TO MONTFORD SOON, ICATIA WILL BE OVERRUN!
NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR US TO BE--
--SEPARATED!
To be concluded.

MAGIC™ Signatures

ADDRESS ALL LETTERS TO:
MAGIC SIGNATURES
Fallen Empires
Jeof Vita - Asst. Editor
c/o ACCLAIM COMICS
275 Seventh Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10001

JEOF VITA

Asst. Editor ARMADA

When we started the Magic: The Gathering comics line, it was our intent to showcase the worlds of Dominia in all their power, glory, majesty, and even...tragedy. **Fallen Empires** chronicles the razing of the civilizations of Sarpadia and the epic struggle of Tymolin Loneglade against the forces of destruction. The characters and creatures that you see in this book are all part of Wizards of the Coasts' most recent Magic: The Gathering trading card game expansion, Fallen Empires.

Now if you're unaware of this phenomenon we call Magic: The Gathering, let me see if I can't get you up to speed.

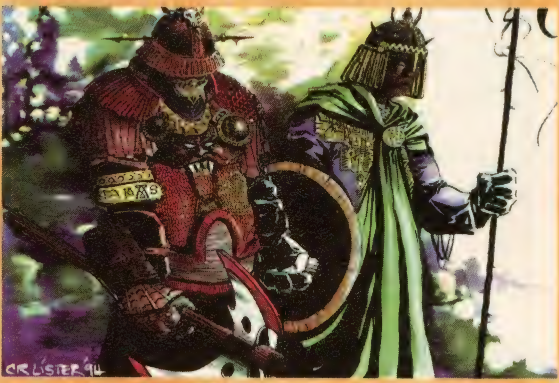
Magic: The Gathering is the nation's hottest trading card game. The game itself is a duel between two players who represent the most powerful magicians on the fantastic universe of Dominia. Both players portray Planeswalkers who take turns casting spells that will both defend their ground and defeat their opponent.

The land of Sarpadia, as depicted in our **Fallen Empires** comics, is set on the world of Dominaria. Many of the nations of Dominaria contain five lands which produce five different-colored mana (Black, Blue, Red, White, and Green). This mana is the power source for Dominaria's magic, and the magical energy used in the game to cast offensive and defensive spells. Spells differ in their casting cost and power, and certain spells have neat little "fast effects" which can make games more interesting. Players combine skill, strategy, and a heaping dose of good luck to construct their decks and thwart the decks of their opponents.

A player can customize his or her deck based on which strategy he or she wishes to employ. One might wish to utilize a creature-based attack and load up with Green spells. Another might like a more direct damage deck and use more Red magic. Players who favor manipulative and deceptive gameplay can use Blue magic to frustrate opponents, while White magic can be used for defense and balanced attacking. The Black magic, a popular choice, is the magic of death and decay—not for the squeamish!

In the Fallen Empires expansion, the five colors of Magic also represent the various cultures of Sarpadia. Blue can be seen as representing the struggle of the Vodalians against the invading Homarids, while the Red magics are home to the Dwarves, Orcs and Goblins. Deep in the forests of Havenwood, the Elvenfolk thrive on their use of Green magic, while the citizens of Icatia wield the White. In sharp contrast, the sinister Ebon Hand lays claim to the sacrificial Black magics of Tourach. When you begin incorporating these cards into your own Magic deck, you'll get to see these and many other awesome creatures, legends, places and artifacts.

In fact, as an added bonus, the first book of this series contains an actual Magic: The Gathering—Fallen Empires booster pack for you to begin your collection! Each card is sure to draw you further and deeper into the dying light of Sarpadia.



Don't fret! Even though all of Sarpadia will be tumbling around our ears, we'll have a trusty guide on our side in the form of Shawn Carnes. Shawn is a Magic: The Gathering rules guru direct from Wizards of the Coast, who will be explaining the use of all these great new spells. He will show off all the neat combinations that we use in the story and provide you with strategy tips for you to use in your next Magic duel!

So write in and let us know what you think. Even though this miniseries only runs two issues, you never know—your letters may indeed show up in other Magic titles from Armada. I'm here to answer all your comments, by the way, I'm also an avid Magic player, so if you have any ideas for awesome spell combinations that we can use in the book, please send 'em on in!

On behalf of the Armada team, I'd like to thank you for picking up this book. I hope you enjoy it half much as we've enjoyed creating it. So then, come with me now and bear witness to the last of the **Fallen Empires**.

A HISTORY of FALLEN EMPIRES™

By John Tynes, Dominia Continuity Coordinator

The Brothers War ended a hundred years ago, but it's legacy is only now beginning. The terrible magical forces unleashed upon the world of Dominaria (as seen in the Antiquities expansion and in the upcoming **Antiquities War** comic book), have brought about terrible climatic shifts, and a new Ice Age has just begun. In the southern hemisphere, the changing weather has brought misery to the continent of Sarpadia. The empires of that land are finding their resources growing scarcer and life becoming dangerous. Fallen Empires tells the tale of these lands, and of the events that set their fall in motion.

Development work on Fallen Empires began in the early summer of 1994. The design team—Skaff Elias, Jim Lin, and Dave Pettey—took on the project with relish. It was the first expansion set that the team (who had recently joined Wizards of the Coast full-time as part of Deckmaster's Research & Development) worked on in-house and on-site. Their goal: to create a well-designed, carefully balanced card set that would encompass everything WotC had learned from previous expansions.

The setting and thematic structure of the project came concurrently with gameplay brainstorming. The team decided to focus on a major event in Dominaria's history and tell a story that was a subtle sequel to their work on Antiquities. They designed Fallen Empires to cluster around the median of card power, and to avoid both spoiler cards and useless cards. This design reflects their philosophy: that Magic: The Gathering should be a game of subtle cunning and constant transformation, rather than a mindless slam-happy game of brute force, where the player with the largest wallet always wins.

The setting and storyline of **Fallen Empires** has been seen in bits and pieces within the card set and in WotC's magazine, **The Duelist.** The comic book you're holding is the first place that some of the origins of the empires' fall have been told. It's a tale of a continent wracked by desperation and corruption, as well as by menaces both internal and external.

The largest of the Sarpadian empires is Icatia, a civilized nation of merchants, bankers, and elected officials, with a strong army and advanced medical knowledge. Strong though Icatia may be without, it is torn from within: the zealot Farrel and his followers are pushing for radical religious and political reforms, a push resulting in a divided populace. Their principal opponent within Icatia is the Order of Leitbur, a group of peace-minded moderates. The Order of Leitbur sees the Farrelites as dangerous extremists; the Farrelites see the Order of Leitbur as meek cowards.

A group which both the Order of Leitbur and the Farrelites fear and oppose is the Order of the Ebon Hand, a corrupt sect that practices sacrifice and sinister magic. The Ebon Hand keeps a low profile, but recently their experiments in creating a sentient slave-race, the Thrulls, have backfired. The Thrulls are in rebellion, causing many problems for the Order.

Off the coast lies the Merfolk nation of Vodalia. Ruled by a militant, magic-wielding Upper Class, the Vodalians are fierce and hard-working, engaging in substantial trade with Icatia and other empires. The Vodalians are opposed by another group called the Homarids: primitive but fast-spreading crustaceans who threaten the survival of Vodalia.

Havenwood Forest is home to a nation of Elves. These Elves recognized the changes in weather and began breeding new forms of fungi as a food source. The unintentional result of this breeding was the Thallids, sentient fungus-creatures that are now in revolt against the decadent Elves who created them. Much like the Order of the Ebon Hand, the Elves are reaping what they have sown.

The major forces of chaos in Sarpadia are the Goblins and Orcs, who thrive even in the harsh climatic changes that are weakening the rest of the land. Their first victory is over the small Dwarven empire, which falls to them almost immediately.

Their next target is Icatia.

Another chaotic element is the planeswalker, Tev Loneglade. He has been living as a recluse for decades, in semi-retirement after growing callous and ceasing to care about the fate of anyone other than his sister. In these pages, Tev will abandon his seclusion as events draw him unavoidably into the conflicts of the empires. The absolute power of his planeswalking abilities has left him bitter and hateful, and should he be provoked, the consequences would be disastrous.

The ultimate fate of the Sarpadian empires is not a pleasant one. The rivalries between the different empires create external discord, while the internal disputes weaken them from within. Tev Loneglade is the wild card that sets the course of the empires...but his story does not end with them. The lesson of **Fallen Empires** is clear: corruption breeds destruction, and those without mercy are those without hope.

Seer Analysis

by Shawn F. Carnes

Hello, planeswalkers! This time around, we get a chance to take a look at the special two-issue Fallen Empires series, based on the intriguing expansion deck of the same name from Wizards of the Coast. This is the third series in Armada's Magic: the Gathering™ comics line, and it focuses on the realm of Sarpadia, the central location for the expansion. My job is to call the shots as I see 'em by pointing out elements in the story as they relate to the game, and how well I think these elements translated into the comics medium. I'll be giving you all the color-commentary on the action as it unfolds.

The story starts off with quite a clash: a Dwarven Stronghold is under siege by numerous Goblins and Orcs. The sheer numbers of Goblins and Orcs are appropriate against the Dwarves, especially with the Goblins (the expansion deck features a number of Goblin cards, as well as Goblin Warrens). The focus is on Tymolin and her lover Kaylen as they defend the stronghold, even as it is being overrun. The battle seems to be accurately portrayed, reflecting the skills and strategies of both sides. The strike from behind against Kaylen is especially appropriate for Orcish behavior; the Orcs of Dominaria have not been known for their bravery or honor in battle. It is a nice touch to establish the land of Sarpadia, at least from the perspective of Red creatures.

Now on to Montford, which highlights Farrel and his followers: nice job in bringing them to life. The Farrelites are zealots through and through, and their fatalistic fanaticism is useful in combat situations. They are not interested in peaceful alternatives in protecting Icatia. Although Icatia represents the White magical aspect of Sarpadia, the zealously blind behavior of Farrel is certainly in keeping with the spirit of both the card and the color. To the Farrelites, might makes right. Farrel's use of the Mantle, as well as the Holy Hand Grenade-like Aeolipile, was an effective touch in highlighting Farrel's use of force and power to achieve his aims.

Personally, I found it almost poetic that the powerful and mighty Mantle was defeated by a simple spell from Tev, the Disenchant. It really can be interesting to see two opponents who are tapping the same colored mana (in this case, White) square off against one another. Tev and Tymolin's confrontation with the Farrelites also shows us that White can be a bit harsher than most people give it credit for. By the way, did you notice what colors Tev used in the battle? There was a smattering of Green and White, but the big stuff he used was Black. It will be interesting to see how Fallen Empires #2 develops this, as Tev is sure to run up against the Ebon Hand.

Wizards
OF THE COAST

Finally, let's take a look at an element the comic effectively examines. One of the biggest reasons why Sarpadia fell was internal conflict. On a specific level, Morgan is a Thelonite Druid who possesses the special ability to manipulate the Forest. In this case, he turns a tree into a 2/3 creature to shake Loren from it and betray his location to the Thallids. Perhaps issue #2 will reveal Morgan's deeper reasons for giving Loren such a hard time—in turn, giving us deeper insight into the dilemma of the Elven Empire.

The strife within the Elven ranks (Loren vs. Morgan) is an interesting twist, bringing to light some of the turmoil that must have contributed to the collapse of such a noble empire. A common misperception when it comes to the backgrounds of the colors in Magic: The Gathering is that devotees of individual colors, in and of themselves, work well together. In this issue, Red has had an all-out battle with Red, White threatens to eliminate the heroes of our story, and Green is embroiled in chaos on two different levels.

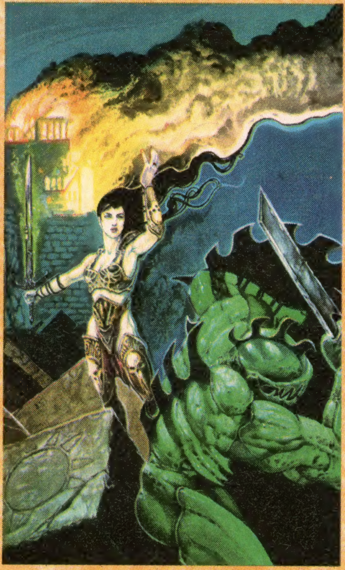
Overall, the first issue was well crafted. Not only did it properly tie into the cards, it makes me want to read Fallen Empires #2! Kudos to the writing talents of Jeff Gomez and Kevin Maples. The art, as always, was breathtaking. Just one thing, however, for all of us to keep an eye on—Tev. I'm telling you, he's got some secret that will come to the surface soon enough. Also, I'm still trying to figure out the combination of cards to keep someone/something alive for centuries, just like Tymolin. Yes, I understand the premise of artistic license—and it's often been said that planeswalkers are long-lived—but it still doesn't hurt to figure these things out for game purposes. Living in perpetuity would certainly put a new dimension to the game!

Until next time, may your Backfire never backfire.

NEXT ISSUE

Magic: The Gathering Fallen Empires #2

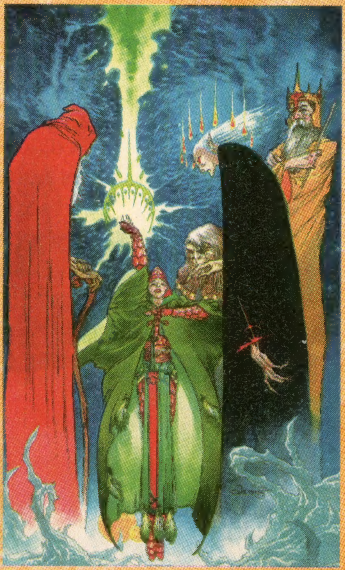
With Tymolin's life in the balance, Tev Loneglade planeswalks into the middle of an escalating standoff between the insane Farrelites and the Cult of the Ebon Hand. The tragic results threaten to throw down Sarpadia's greatest kingdoms. This issue's spectacular conclusion forms the perfect lead-in to Armada's **Ice Age on the World of Magic: The Gathering** miniseries. Featuring a new cover painting by premier Magic painter Anson Maddocks, and a free set of **Creature Tokens** for use in your Magic duels.



COMING IN MAY

Ice Age on The World Of Magic: The Gathering #3

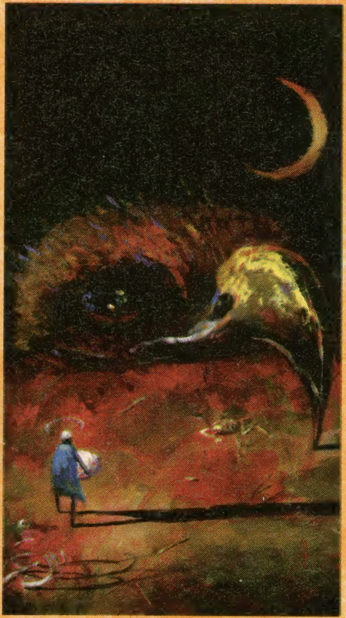
The secret behind the Ice Age that grips Dominaria is revealed in this spectacular issue: several powerful Planewalkers who have been trapped in "The Shard" converge on one of the planet's two moons to determine the cause of this multi-planar cataclysm. As is bound to happen with Planeswalkers, a duel of epic proportions breaks out, featuring spells from **Antiquities, The Dark, Fallen Empires,** and **Ice Age.** This issue boasts a cover painting by Charles Vess, and a free set of **Creature Tokens** for use in your Magic: The Gathering game duels.



COMING IN JULY

Antiquities War On the World of Magic: The Gathering #1

The greatest, most far-reaching magical war in the history of Magic: The Gathering starts here! Adapted from events depicted in the Antiquities expansion of the Magic: The Gathering trading card game, we are introduced to Urza and Mishra, two brothers destined for destruction! Writer Jerry Prosser (**Animal Man, Skin Graft, Comics Greatest World**) lends this new series a sophisticated air, and popular **X-Men** artist Paul Smith makes his Armada debut. **Featuring a painted cover by George Pratt.**



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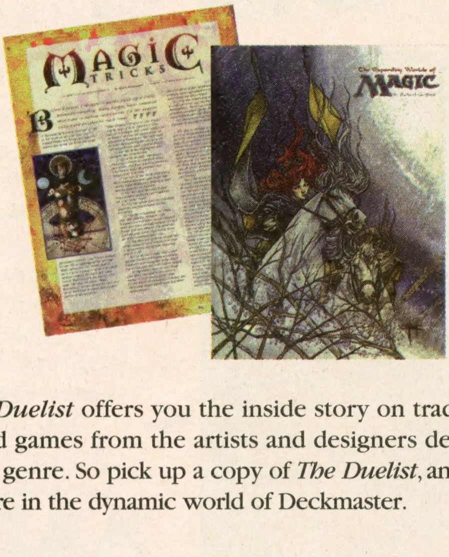
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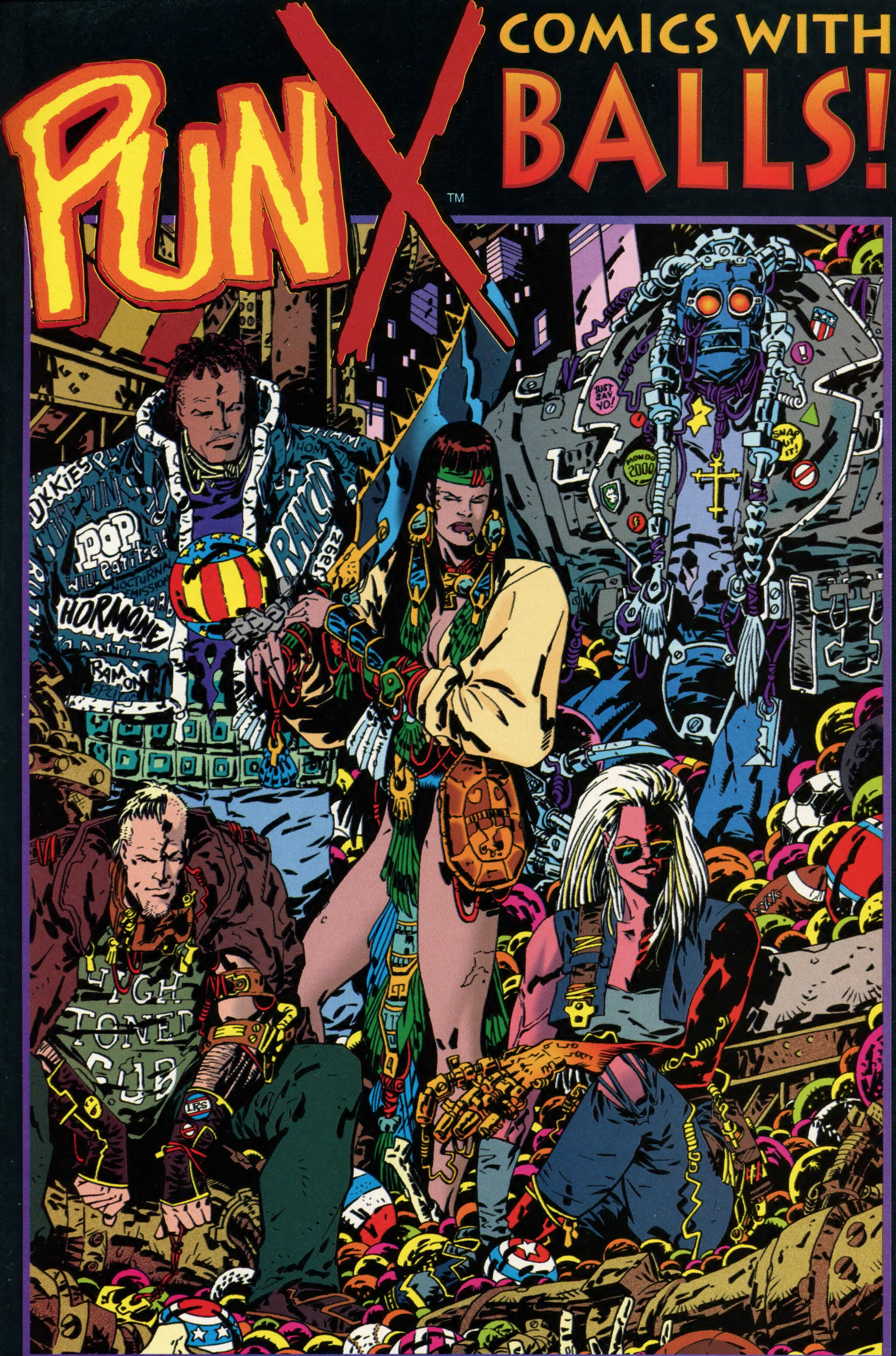
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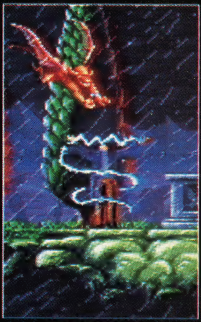

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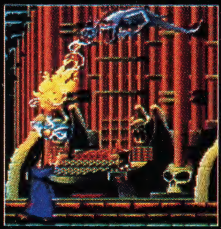

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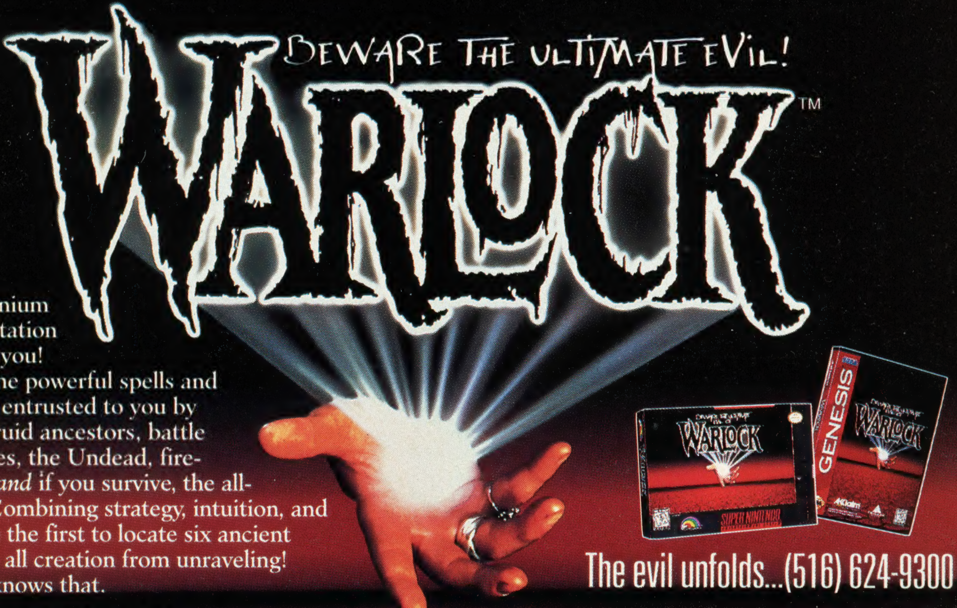

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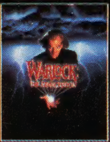

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